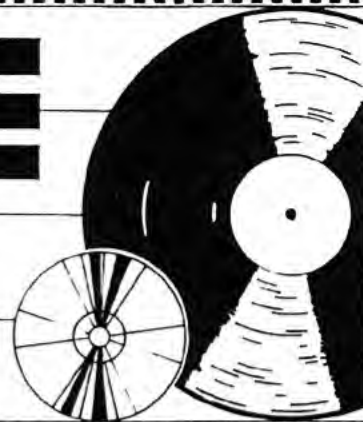


# FILM SCORE MONTHLY



#62, October 1995

\$2.95

## DANNY ELFMAN

*SCISSORTONGUE!*

ROBERT TOWNSON  
INSIDE VARÈSE SARABANDE

OPINION: THE TEN MOST  
INFLUENTIAL FILM SCORES

REVIEW: JERRY GOLDSMITH  
VIDEO DOCUMENTARY

PLUS: NEW CD REVIEWS  
LETTERS FROM READERS

JOHN OTTMAN  
SCORING (AND EDITING!)...



THE USUAL SUSPECTS



# FILM SCORE MONTHLY

Issue #62, October 1995

Lukas Kendall  
Box 1554, Amherst College  
Amherst MA 01002-5000

Phone/fax: 413-542-3478 (no 4AM faxes!)

E-mail: ldkendal@unix.amherst.edu

After May 1996: RFD 488, Vineyard Haven  
MA 02568; ph: 508-693-9116

Really Fast Typist: Lukas Kendall

Also Hated GoldenEye: Andy Dursin

Blessed Be the Writers: Jeff Bond, Owen T. Cunningham, Jason Foster, Ryan Harvey, Mike Shapiro, James Tornaiainen, Christopher Walsh, John S. Walsh (no relation).

Graphics: William Smith

How to sequence *Goldfinger*, by Bill Powell, combining the CD with the extra tracks on the Bond 30th Anniversary 2CD set: 1) track 4: Bond Back in Action Again (2:29). 2) 1: Main Title (2:47). 3) 2: Into Miami (to 0:55). 4) track 5, disc 2, Best of...: Golden Girl (2:07). 5) 2: Alpine Drive/Auric's Factory (rest of track). 6) 6/2: Death of Tilley (2:01). 7) 7/2: The Laser Beam (2:00). 8) 4/2: Pussy Galore's Flying Circus (2:45). 9) 5: Teasing the Korean (2:12). 10) 6: Gassing the Gangsters (1:03). 11) 3: Oddjob's Pressing Engagement (3:05). 12) 8: Dawn Raid on Fort Knox (5:43). 13) 9: Arrival of the Bomb/Countdown (3:25). 14) 10: Death of Goldfinger/End Titles (2:34). Film end titles have vocal by Shirley Bassey. CD track 7 not in film.

The Soundtrack Handbook: Is a free six page listing of mail order dealers, books, societies, radio shows, etc. It is sent automatically to all subscribers or to anyone upon request. Please write.

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## From the Editor...

Disgruntled readers, please have mercy on me. A lot of people ask, "Wow, how do you manage to put out this magazine and go to school?" The answer is, truthfully, I can't. I'm in the midst of another busy semester (I'm a senior and graduate next year), something has to give, and hence I've been late with FSM. (By the way, I am a music major, and am doing a thesis on film music, in a surprise move. I am looking at post-tonal scores I like such as *The Mechanic* and *Alien*. Quarter tones! And dammit, I should be enjoying college. I have regrets already.)

However, the good news is that I have a lot of material done for the next few issues. There's part two of the Danny Elfman article, a large James Bond feature (including Eric Serra giving his thoughts on *GoldenEye*), David Arnold, collector retrospectives on Davy Crockett and blaxploitation (the latter by Recordman), and the usual controversies and reviews. Incidentally, the reason my Elfman article this month begins with a lot of paraphrasing is because my tape recorder stinks and only got part of the conversation. Boy, did I feel dumb. Also, the Robert Townson interview was done last July, which is why all the "forthcoming" albums he mentions are now already out. Excuses, excuses.

**Best of 1995:** It's time for our annual best-of-the-year poll, where readers' subjective opinions are marked in history as the last word of taste. Categories this year: 1) Best New Score: Pick the five best scores to new 1995 movies, numbered 1-5 (we weight the votes). Do not pick more than five, and do not pick late 1994 movies (*StarGate*, *Legends of the Fall*, etc.), they will be ignored. 2) Oscar Guesses: Pick the five scores you think will be nominated each in the new dramatic-score category, and in the musical or comedy-score category (Alan Menken goes in the latter). These are not necessarily the best scores, just the ones you think the Academy will nominate. Indicate your predicted winners as well. 3) Best Composers—not the best of all time, but the ones who had the best output in 1995. Pick three, rank them. 4) Best Unreleased Score (1995 only). Pick one. 5) Best Record Label—again, for 1995 only. Pick one. 6) Best New Album of Older Score (i.e. reissues). Pick five, rank. Can be original recording or re-recording. *No bootlegs*. 7) Best New Compilation—either original tracks or newly recorded. A compilation has three or more scores on it. Pick three. Also, the fun stuff: 8) Worst New Score. 9) Worst Composer (1995 only). 10) Worst Record Label. Pick as many as you want on these, but 1-3 is fine. Expose the hacks! Oh, and 11) (optional) Feel free to make up your own categories and mention whatever you'd like, but keep it brief. Send your lists to Andy Dursin, PO Box 846, Greenville RI 02828, not to Lukas! (Andy traditionally compiles this poll.) Please wait until the end of the year (i.e. so you've heard relevant late 1995 material), and send in no later than January 31, 1996.

**Events:** Jerry Goldsmith was honored with *Variety's* first American Music Legend Award in mid-October, presented at a country club dinner attended by over 350 people, hosted by Casey Casum. There was even a 12-person orchestra, conducted by David Newman and playing excerpts from Goldsmith's scores. • "Amram Jam," a 65th birthday celebration concert for film and concert composer and jazz performer David Amram, took place on Nov. 18 at the Music Hall in



Tarrytown, New York. Contact L.S. Public Relations, Inc., 1776 Broadway, Ste 1804, New York NY 10019 for more info. • Elliot Goldenthal (*Batman Forever*) won the readers' choice *Sci-Fi Universe* magazine award for Best Score 1995.

**Obituary:** British composer Brian Easdale died October 30, 1995, at age 86. He was an Oscar winner for *The Red Shoes* (1948); his other film scores included *Black Narcissus*, *The Small Back Room*, *Gone to Earth*, *The Elusive Pimpernel*, *The Miracle in Soho*, *Battle of the River Plate*, *Peeping Tom* and *Outcast of the Islands*. He was also a composer of ballet and concert music.

**Print Watch:** The Max Steiner Music Society has published their 30th Anniversary *Max Steiner Film Music Journal*, 24 pages of info, essays and photos. Write them at 1 Rotherford Road, Putney, London SW15 1LA, England. • The Sunday 11/26/95 *New York Times* had a half-page article on Erich Wolfgang Korngold in the Arts section, discussing resurgent interest in him as a serious classical composer. The Sunday before, they had an article on Golden Age film music in the concert hall. • The summer edition of *Film Ex*, a movie-fan newsletter, featured several film music articles—a general history of movie music, a spotlight on Hermann, a discussion of music in Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, and brief reviews of summer soundtrack CDs. Send \$2 to PO Box 1068, Westtown PA 19395-0540. • *Gramophone* magazine will publish *The Gramophone Film Music Guide* in February or March—reviews of 350 soundtrack CDs by over 100 composers, with short bios for each. • The current issue of *Film Comment* has a tribute to Miklós Rózsa. • The 10/20/95 *Arizona Republic* had an article on Shostakovich's music for Eisenstein's silent film *Potemkin* being performed in concert. • The new issue of *Penthouse* features a new interview with Danny Elfman, plus lots of pictures, I'm told. • *Music from the House of Hammer* is a new book by film-music journalist Randall Larson, due soon from Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham MD 20706; ph: 1-800-462-6420 or 301-459-3366. Featured are James Bernard, Harry Robinson, Leonard Salzedo, Gerard Schurmann, Mario Nascimbene, David Whitaker and more.

**TV/Radio Watch:** James Horner (*Jumanji*), Randy Newman (*Toy Story*) and Kenny Edmonds (*Waiting to Exhale*) were scheduled to appear on CNN's *Showbiz Today* the week of November 6. NBC's *Weekend Update* reportedly had a few minutes of Horner recording *Jumanji* on the Nov. 11/12 show. According to someone who watched it, "Horner revealed he has a poor memory in regards his past scores which explains a lot." • John Barry was among the interviewees for Fox's *James Bond Special*, airing October 29. Shirley Bassey was also featured; they talked about *Goldfinger* and stuff. • A documentary entitled *Ennio Morricone: Maestro of the Movies* aired on BBC2 TV in England on November 30. • Mark Isham was interviewed on NPR's *All Things Considered* on November 29, talking about his film and jazz work. • "The Imperial March" from *The Empire Strikes Back* was played on stadium loudspeakers at game three of the World Series, as the visiting team (Atlanta) was introduced in Cleveland's Jacobs Field. • Gillian Anderson was featured at length on the 12/5/95 CBS *Sunday Morning* program, about her work restoring silent film scores.

**Mail Order Dealers:** If you're looking for CDs from many of the obscure and/or overseas labels mentioned in FSM, as well as the elusive promotional CDs, you'll have to go through the specialty dealers. Try Screen Archives (202-328-1434), Intrada (415-776-1333), STAR (717-656-0121), Footlight Records (212-533-1572) and Super Collector (714-839-3693) in this country.



**Music for the Movies:** Sony has released on VHS and laserdisc the first four documentaries in this series: Bernard Herrmann, Toru Takemitsu, Georges Delerue and "The Hollywood Sound."

**Promos:** Rhino sent out in October a promotional compilation of their Turner reissue music to date, *Hollywood's Most Precious Jewels*: musicals, *Doctor Zhivago*, *The Wizard of Oz*, etc. No previously unreleased music, but it is packaged in a padded flip-open case with disc and booklet inside. • Intrada is preparing a second promotional 2CD set for Laurence Rosenthal (the first came out last year), concentrating on his music for television movies and mini-series. It will be available to collectors in January through the usual specialty outlets. • Super Collector has released promo albums for Lee Holdridge (*The Beastmaster/Beauty and the Beast*) and *The Amazing Panda Adventure* (Bill Ross).

**Laserdiscs:** Warner Bros.' upcoming deluxe CAV laserdisc box set of *The Wild Bunch*, due first quarter 1996, will include a 76 minute stereo CD of the original Jerry Fielding score. The package also includes a 72 page collector's book on Peckinpah and the film, and two hours of behind-the-scenes footage. • Due in January from Fox is a new letterboxed laserdisc of *The Omen*, including the complete Jerry Goldsmith score isolated in stereo on the analog tracks. Some unused cues have even been included, synched up to the correct places in the film on this secondary audio channel. • MCA will release a special-edition laserdisc probably in January of Steven Spielberg's *1941*, restoring a great deal of cut footage. At this time it is scheduled to have John Williams' score isolated in stereo.

**Recent Releases:** Hollywood has released *Father of the Bride II*, Alan Silvestri score and oldies. • TEC Tones has released a CD of Michael Perilstein's music to *Where Evil Lives* (low budget horror movie), nicely packaged; write to the label at PO Box 1477, Hoboken NJ 07030, ph: 201-420-0238. • Sony Classical has released the soundtrack to *Total Eclipse* by Polish composer Jan A.P. Kaczmarek. • Varèse Vintage has reissued on CD the old *William Shatner: The Transformed Man* and *Leonard Nimoy: Mr. Spock's Music from Outer Space* albums from the late 1960s. They're hilarious. • MCA has released an audiophile "heavy vinyl" LP of *Out of Africa* (John Barry, remastered).

**Raiders of the Lost Raiders CD:** After many delays, DCC has released their CD and 2LP audiophile set of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (John Williams, expanded and remastered). The CD was released in Europe by Silva Screen. Distribution has been sucky, so you may want to mail order it from the specialty dealers, rather than wait for it to show up at the corner record store.

**Incoming:** Warner Bros. aborted their planned CD of *The Wild Bunch* (Jerry Fielding, album re-recording). • Streamline has delayed their 2CD set of music to *Robotech* (1985 animated series) until early 1996. • Capriccio's re-recording of *The Story of Ruth* (Waxman) is expected soon. • Mobile Fidelity was expected to issue on December 12 a gold CD of Bernard Herrmann's *The Fantasy Film World of...* album, originally

recorded for the London label in the early '70s.

## Those Poor, Self-Interested Labels

**BMG:** The first six new "100 Years of Film Music" recordings are out in Europe: a Waxman compilation, a Tiomkin compilation, *Panamerica* by Winfried Zillig (1960 German documentary), *Nosferatu: A Symphony in Horror* (Hans Erdmann), *Ivan the Terrible* by Prokofiev, and an album of music to German silent films by Karl-Ernst Sasse. There is also a sampler compilation of these discs. They will all be released in the U.S. in April. Due in April in Germany are the next six CDs: a *Mark Twain* album (Steiner and Korngold's respective *Twain* scores), a film noir album, *The Gold Rush* (Chaplin), *Metropolis* (one of the scores to the silent film), an album of Disney "Silly Symphony" music, and one more.

**Cambria:** Recording in December in Poland for release next March are two CDs of previously unreleased music from classic monster movies of the 1950s and '60s: *Monstrous Movie Music* features *Them!* (Bronislau Kaper), *The Mole People* (Herman Stein, Heinz Roemheld), *It Came from Outer Space* (Stein, Irving Gertz, Henry Mancini), *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (Mischa Bakaleinikoff). *More Monstrous Movie Music* has *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (David Buttolph), *The Monolith Monsters* (Gertz), *Tarantula* (Stein, Mancini), and *Gorgo* (Angelo Francesco Lavagnino). For more information, write the label at: PO Box 7088, Burbank CA 91510-7088.

**Citadel:** Now out is *Zooman/Woman Undone* (Daniel Licht, Showtime TV movies, orchestral).

**DRG:** The "Classic Italian Soundtracks" series will resume in early 1996, titles to be announced.

**Epic Soundtrax:** *From Dusk Till Dawn* is due January 23 (Miramax film, all songs).

**Fox:** Fox is still working to set up a new distribution deal and release the following Classic Series discs in early 1996: 1) *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir/A Hatful of Rain* (1947/1957, Bernard Herrmann). 2) *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959, Herrmann). 3) *Forever Amber* (1947, David Raksin). 4) *The Mephisto Waltz/The Other* (1970/1971, Goldsmith). 5) *Beneath the 12 Mile Reef/Garden of Evil* (1953/1954, Herrmann).

**GNP/Crescendo:** Pushed back to January or February is the 6CD Irwin Allen box set: music from *Lost in Space*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *The Time Tunnel* and *Land of the Giants*, by "Johnny" Williams, Jerry Goldsmith, Paul Sawtell, Sandy Courage, George Duning and others. Planned for early spring is *Forever Knight* (Fred Mollin, syndicated vampire-cop TV show); also in the works is another *Alien Nation* album (David Kurtz), for the first three TV moves.

**Intrada:** Due Jan. 23: an expanded, remastered edition of *The Last Starfighter* (1984, Craig Safan, 49 min.) and *Castle Freak* (Richard Band horror score). Intrada is a label and mail order outlet, write for free catalog to 1488 Vallejo St, San Francisco CA 94109; ph: 415-776-1333.

**Koch:** Due February is a new recording of Miklós Rózsa's *El Cid* (1961, James Sedares/New Zealand Symphony Orchestra), as well as a new recording of Rózsa's *Symphonia Concertante*.

**Legend/OST:** Forthcoming on the Italian Legend label is *Hurricane* (Nino Rota) coupled with *La diga sul pacifico* (aka *This Angry Age*, with Anthony Perkins), and a 2CD set (150 minutes) of music by Armando Trovajoli for the Ettore Scola films, including a booklet (text in Italian). Forthcoming in the RCA OST series is a compilation CD, *Four Westerns by Nico Fidenco*.

**Marco Polo:** Imminent are *House of Frankenstein* (Salter, Dessau) and *Son of Frankenstein/The Wolfman/The Invisible Man Returns* (Salter, Skinner, C. Previn). Due next year are a new Erich Wolfgang Korngold album (*Another Dawn, Between Two Worlds, Escape Me Never*), a Max Steiner album (*Lost Patrol, Beast with Five Fingers, Virginia City*), and a piano concert CD, with Herrmann's "Concerto Macabre" from *Hangover Square*, Addinsell's "Warsaw Concerto" and "Cornish Rhapsody," and more.

**MCA Japan:** Trickle into this country—slowly and expensively—are reissues from the Decca vaults: *The Chaplin Revue*, *Fire Down Below*, *Comanche*, *It Started in Naples*, and *God Created Woman*, *One Step Beyond*, *Airport*, *Airport 1975*, *Rollercoaster* and *The Competition*.

**Milan:** Due Jan. 16: *Restoration* (James Newton Howard); due March 26: *Primal Fear* (Howard).

**Play It Again:** Forthcoming from this U.K. label: *The A to Z of British TV Themes, Vol. 3*.

**PolyGram:** Due January 9 is *City of Lost Children* (Angelo Badalamenti, U.S. release). Michael Kamen-score and compilation-song CDs to *Mr. Holland's Opus* are both due Jan. 23.

**Rhino:** Scheduled CDs from the Turner vaults (both movie musicals and scores): January: *Cabin in the Sky*, a Lena Horne/MGM compilation. February: *Gigi*, *The Harvey Girls* (Judy Garland film), *For Me and My Gal*. March: *Ben-Hur* (Miklós Rózsa, 3CD set), *Korngold at Warner Bros.* (compilation), *House of Dark Shadows/Night of Dark Shadows* (soap operas). April: *Singin' in the Rain*, *The Bad and the Beautiful* (David Raksin). Other score albums planned for 1996 include *Gone with the Wind*, *King of Kings*, *Ryan's Daughter*, *How the West Was Won* and 2001. • A second volume of Hanna-Barbera music (including *Jonny Quest!*) is also planned.

**Silva Screen:** Recording for release in 1996: Miklós Rózsa: *Historical Film Scores*, *The Classic John Barry 2*, *Classic Western Themes*, *The Devil Rides Out*; *Classic British Horror Scores*, *She: Music for Hammer Horror Films*, and a classical album with Rózsa's Cello Concerto and Gerard Schumann's "The Gardens of Exile."

**Super Tracks:** *The Scarlet Letter* (John Morris, PBS mini-series) is out. Due in January is *Nixon: The Final Days* (Cliff Eidelman, TV movie).

**Varèse Sarabande:** Due January: *Othello* (new Castle Rock film with Kenneth Branagh and Laurence Fishburne, music by Charlie Mole), *The Adjuster and Other Scores for Atom Egoyan* (Mychael Danna, also with *Family Viewing* and *Speaking Parts*), and *Lawnmower Man II* (Robert Folk). • Joel McNeely and The Royal Scottish National Orchestra have re-recorded *Vertigo* (Bernard Herrmann, complete score, over one hour) for release next spring. •

## CURRENT FILMS, COMPOSERS AND ALBUMS

<i>Ace Ventura: When Nature...</i>	Robert Folk	MCA (songs)	<i>It Takes Two</i>	Sherman & Ray Foote
<i>The American President</i>	Marc Shaiman	MCA	<i>Leaving Las Vegas</i>	Mike Figgis
<i>Carrington</i>	Michael Nyman	Argo/London	<i>Money Train</i>	Mark Mancina
<i>Casino</i>	various	MCA	<i>Nick of Time</i>	Arthur B. Rubinstein
<i>Copycat</i>	Christopher Young	Milan	<i>Nixon</i>	John Williams
<i>The Crossing Guard</i>	Jack Nitzsche		<i>Seven</i>	Howard Shore
<i>Frankie Starlight</i>	Elmer Bernstein	Varèse Sarabande	<i>Things to Do in Denver...</i>	Michael Convertino
<i>Get Shorty</i>	John Lurie	Antilles/PolyGram	<i>Toy Story</i>	Randy Newman
<i>GoldenEye</i>	Eric Serra	Virgin	<i>White Man's Burden</i>	Howard Shore
<i>Home for the Holidays</i>	Mark Isham	Mercury	<i>Wild Bill</i>	Van Dyke Parks



## UPCOMING MOVIES

Not much exciting news this month. James Newton Howard and Hans Zimmer are running neck-and-neck in the music-composing franchise business, whereby each farms scores off to "co-composers." • The tank chase music in *GoldenEye* was a re-score by John Altman, Eric Serra's conductor, when the producers wanted a more traditional version of the Bond theme. The *GoldenEye* trailer music was not by Serra, but Starr Parodi and Jeff Fair, a trailer/production music team. • Everything is subject to change! Scores are being tossed left and right! Don't believe anything you read!

DAVID ARNOLD: *Independence Day*.  
JOHN BARRY: *Bliss*.  
BRUCE BROUGHTON: *The Shadow Program*, *House Arrest*, *Acts of Love*, *Infinity* (d. M. Broderick), *Homeward Bound 2*.  
CARTER BURWELL: *Joe's Apartment*, *Journey of the August King*, *No Fear*.  
BILL CONTI: *Napoleon*, *Dorothy Day*, *Spy Hard*, *Car Pool*.  
MICHAEL C. CONVERTINO: *Amelia and the King of Plants*, *Pie in the Sky*.  
STEWART COPELAND: *Boys* (w/ Winona Ryder).  
DON DAVIS: *Bound*.  
JOHN DEBNEY: *Getting Away with Murder*, *Cutthroat Island*, *Relics*.  
PATRICK DOYLE: *Sense and Sensibility*.

JOHN DUPREZ: *Death Fish*.  
RANDY EDELMAN: *Dragon Heart*, *Diabolique* (w/ Sharon Stone), *Down Periscope*, *Daylight*.  
DANNY ELFMAN: *Freeway* (art movie, prod. Oliver Stone), *The Frigtheners* (by the Heavenly Creatures guy).  
STEPHEN ENDELMAN: *Così*, *Reckless*, *Keys to Tulsa*, *Huck and Tom*.  
GEORGE FENTON: *Land and Freedom*, *Mary Reilly*, *Heaven's Prisoner*, *The Crucible*, *Mariotti in Ecstasy*, *Multiplicity*.  
ROBERT FOLK: *Lawnmower Man 2*, *T-Rex*.  
ELLIOT GOLDENTHAL: *Voices*, *Michael Collins*, *A Time to Kill* (d. Joel Schumacher), *Heat* (w. De Niro and Al Pacino), *Two Days in the Valley* (Pulp Fiction type film).  
JERRY GOLDSMITH: *City Hall* (w/ Al Pacino), *Executive Decision* (w/ Kurt Russell), *Two Days in the Valley* (Pulp Fiction type film).  
MILES GOODMAN: *Sunset Park*, *Dunston Checks In*.  
CHARLES GROSS: *Family Thing*.  
DAVE GRUSIN: *Mulholland Falls*.  
MARVIN HAMLISCH: *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (d. B. Streisand).  
BERNARD HERRMANN: Just kidding. Oh, if only it were so.  
JAMES HORNER: *Balto*, *Courage Under Fire*.  
JAMES NEWTON HOWARD: *Eye for an Eye*, *Restoration*, *Primal Fear*, *Dead Drop*, *The Juror* (John Barry walked off the picture), *Space Jam* (w/

Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny, d. Ivan Reitman), *Rich Man's Wife* (co-composer).  
MARK ISHAM: *Last Dance*, *Nickel and Dime*, *Father Goose*.  
MICHAEL KAMEN: *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Jack*, *101 Dalmatians* (live action).  
WOJCIECH KILAR: *The Quest*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.  
HUMMIE MANN: *Dracula Dead and Liking It* (d. Mel Brooks).  
MARK MANCINA: *Twister* (d. Jan DeBont), *Moll Flanders*.  
JOEL MCNEELY: *Flipper*.  
ALAN MENKEN: *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Hercules* (animated).  
CYNTHIA MILLAR: *Three Wishes*.  
DAVID NEWMAN: *The Nutty Professor* (w/ Eddie Murphy), *Big Bully*, *Matilda* (d. Danny DeVito), *The Phantom* (d. Simon Wincer).  
RANDY NEWMAN: *James and the Giant Peach*, *Cats Can't Dance*.  
THOMAS NEWMAN: *Up Close and Personal*, *The Craft*, *Marvin's Room*, *American Buffalo*.  
M. NYMAN: *Mesmer*, *Portrait of a Lady*.  
JOHN OTTMAN: *The Cable Guy* (w/ Jim Carrey).  
BASIL POLEDOURIS: *It's My Party* (d. Randall Kleiser), *Celtic Pride*.  
RACHEL PORTMAN: *Palookaville*, *Honest Courtesan*.  
J.A.C. REDFORD: *Mighty Ducks 3*.  
GRAEME REVELL: *Killer*, *Race the Sun*, *The Crow 2*, *From Dusk till Dawn*.  
RICHARD ROBBINS: *Surviving Picasso*,

*La Proprietaire*.  
JEFF RONA: *White Squall* (d. Ridley Scott, replacing Maurice Jarre).  
WILLIAM ROSS: *Black Sheep*.  
CRAIG SAFAN: *Mr. Wrong*.  
JOHN SCOTT: *Walking Thunder*, *The Lucona Affair*, *Night Watch*, *The North Star* (d. Nils Gaup).  
ERIC SERRA: *The Fifth Element* (d. Luc Besson).  
MARC SHAIMAN: *Bogus*, *First Wives' Club*, *Mother* (d. Albert Brooks).  
HOWARD SHORE: *Striptease*, *Before and After*, *Crash*, *Truth About Cats and Dogs*, *Looking for Richard* (formerly *Richard III*), *Ransom* (d. R. Howard), *That Thing You Do* (d. and starring Tom Hanks).  
ALAN SILVESTRI: *Father of the Bride 2*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Sgt. Bilko*, *Eraser* (w/ Arnold Schwarzenegger), *Grumpier Old Men*.  
MARK SNOW: *Katie*.  
STEPHEN SONDHEIM: *La cage aux folles* (d. Nichols, songs and score).  
CHRIS STONE: *The Stupids* (d. Landis).  
SHIRLEY WALKER: *Escape from L.A.*.  
JOHN WILLIAMS: *Sabrina*, *Nixon*.  
PATRICK WILLIAMS: *The Grass Harp*.  
CHRISTOPHER YOUNG: *Unforgettable* (d. Dahl).  
HANS ZIMMER: *Muppet Treasure Island*, *Broken Arrow*, *The Prince of Egypt*, *Bishop's Wife*, *The Fan*, *The Rock* (co-composer).

## FILM MUSIC CONCERTS

**California:** Dec. 16, 17—Pacific Sym., Santa Ana; *A Christmas Carol* (Waxman).  
**Delaware:** Feb. 2, 3—Delaware s.o., Wilmington; *Lawrence of Arabia* (Jarre), *Around the World in 80 Days* (Young), *Things to Come* (Bliss), *The Raiders March* (Williams).  
**Georgia:** Jan. 13—Gainesville s.o.; *Somebody in Time* (Barry), *Unchained* (North).  
**Michigan:** Feb. 10—Southwest Michigan s.o., St. Joseph; *Sayonara* (Waxman), *Murder on the Orient Express* (Bennett), *The Philadelphia Story* (Waxman), *Around the World in 80 Days* (Young), *The Adventures of Don*

*Juan* (Steiner), *Cleopatra* (North).  
**Montana:** Feb. 3, 9—Bozeman s.o.; *Star Trek: The Next Generation* theme (Courage/Goldsmith).  
**New York:** Jan. 14—Rochester s.o.; *Currier and Ives* (Herrmann). Feb. 3—Niagara Sym.; *Out of Africa* (Barry), *Lawrence of Arabia* (Jarre).  
**Texas:** Dec. 23—Sym. of Southeast Texas, Beaumont; "It's Christmas Time This Year" arranged by Lee Holdridge.  
**Canada:** Feb. 29—Nova Scotia s.o., Halifax; *The Mission* (Morricone).  
**England:** Dec. 14—BBC Radio, London, cond. George Fenton; *It's a Wonderful Life* (Tiomkin), *A Christmas Carol* (Waxman).

**France:** Jan. 1—Orchestra National de Toulouse; *Psycho*, *Vertigo* (Herrmann).  
**Italy:** Dec. 23—Torino s.o.; *Taras Bulba* (Waxman), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Mancini), *Ben-Hur* (Rózsa), more.  
**Japan:** Feb. 12—Osaka Sym., Symphony Hall, Tokyo; *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Mancini), *Rota Medley* (w/ Godfather), *Romeo and Juliet* (Rota).  
**Norway:** Dec. 14, Jan. 15—Trondheim s.o.; *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (Kamen). Jan. 31, Feb. 1—Stavanger s.o.; *Psycho* (Herrmann).  
The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra will tour Japan with five performances, Jan. 1-5; music from *Star Trek V*, *Unchained*, *Ben-Hur*, *Cinema Paradiso*, more.

Symphony Nova Scotia will perform a film music-inspired pops concert on March 22, 1996; *The Lion King*, *The Wizard of Oz*, James Bond films, etc.

A memorial concert for Christopher Palmer is still being planned at the Royal Festival Hall, London.

For a list of silent film music concerts, write to Tom Murray, 440 Davis Ct #1312, San Francisco CA 94111.

This is a list of concerts with film music pieces in their programs. Contact the respective orchestra's box office for more info. Thanks go to John Waxman for the majority of this list, as he provides the scores and parts to the orchestras.

## FILM SCORE MONTHLY BACKISSUES

Send to Box 1554, Amherst College, Amherst MA 01002-5000; postage free. U.S. funds only. Take all of 1993 (#30/31-#40) for \$20 (\$6 off!). Take all of '94 (#41-52) for \$22 (also \$6 off!). Most '93's are xeroxes.  
#30/31, Feb./March '93, 64 pages. Maurice Jarre, Basil Poledouris, Jay Chattaway, John Scott, Chris Young, Mike Lang; the secondary market, Ennio Morricone albums, Elmer Bernstein FMC LPs; '92 in review. \$5  
#32, April 1993, 16 pages. Temp-tracking *Matinee*, SPFM '93 Con. Report, *Star Trek* editorial. \$2.50  
#33, May 1993, 12 pages. Book reviews, articles on classical and film connection. \$2  
#34, June 1993, 16 pages. Goldsmith dinner report; orchestrators & what they do, *Lost in Space*, recycled Herrmann; review spotlights on Christopher Young, *Pinochio*, Bruce Lee film scores. \$2.50  
#35, July 1993, 16 pages. Tribute to David Kraft; John Beal Part 1: scores vs. songs, Herrmann Christmas operas; Composers Dictionary. \$2.50  
#36/37, August/September, 1993, 40 pages. Elmer Bernstein, Bob Townson (Varèse), Richard Kraft and Nick Redman Part 1, John Beal Part 2; reviews of CAM CDs; collector interest articles, classic corner, fantasy film scores of Elmer Bernstein, more. \$4  
#38, October 1993, 16 pages. John Debnay (*seaQuest DSV*), Richard Kraft and Nick Redman Part 2. \$2.50  
#39, November 1993, 16 pages. Richard Kraft and Nick Redman Part 3, Fox CDs, *Nightmare Before Christmas* & *Bride of Frankenstein* spotlights. \$2.50

#40, December 1993, 16 pages. Kraft & Redman 4, Recording *The Magnificent Seven*. \$2.50  
#41/42/43, January/February/March 1994, 48 pages. Elliot Goldenthal, James Newton Howard, Kitaro and Randy Miller (*Heaven & Earth*), Rachel Portman, Ken Darby; *Star Wars* trivia/cue sheets; sexy album covers; music for westerns overview; 1993 in review. \$4  
#44, April 1994, 24 pages. Joel McNeely, Basil Poledouris (*On Deadly Ground*); SPFM Morricone tribute report and photos; lots of reviews. \$3  
#45, May 1994, 24 pages. Randy Newman (*Maverick*), Graeme Revell (*The Crow*); Goldsmith in concert; in-depth reviews: *The Magnificent Seven* and *Schindler's List*; Instant Liner Notes, book reviews. \$3  
#46/47, June/July 1994, 24 pages. Patrick Doyle, James Newton Howard (*Wyatt Earp*), John Morgan (restoring Hans Salter scores); Tribute to Mancini; overview: Michael Nyman music for films, collectible CDs. \$3  
#48, August 1994, 24 pages. Mark Mancina (*Speed*); Chuck Cirino & Peter Rotter; Richard Kraft: advice for aspiring film composers; classical music in films; new CAM CDs; Cinerama LPs; bestselling soundtracks. \$3  
#49, September 1994, 24 pages. Hans Zimmer, Shirley Walker; Laurence Rosenthal on the Vineyard; Hans Salter in memoriam; classical music in films; John Williams in concert; Recordman at the flea market. \$3  
#50, October 1994, 24 pages. Alan Silvestri (*Forrest Gump*); Mark Isham; sex and soundtrack sales; Lalo Schiffrin in concert; Morricone Beat CDs; that wacky Internet; Recordman on liner notes. \$3

#51, November 1994, 24 pages. Howard Shore (*Ed Wood*), Thomas Newman (*Shawshank Redemption*), J. Peter Robinson (*New Nightmare*), Lukas's mom; the music of *Heimat*, *Star Trek* Part 1; promo CDs. \$3  
#52, December 1994, 24 pages. Eric Serra, Marc Shaiman Part 1, Sandy De Crescent (music contractor), Valencia Film Music Conference, SPFM Conference Part 1, *StarGate* liner notes, Shostakovichs Anon. \$3  
#53/54, Jan./February 1995, 24 pages. Marc Shaiman Part 2, Dennis McCarthy (*Star Trek*); Sergio Basseti, Jean-Claude Petit and Armando Trovajoli in Valencia; Oscar and Music Part 1; rumored LPs, quad LPs. \$3  
#55/56, March/April 1995, 24 pages. Basil Poledouris (*The Jungle Book*), Alan Silvestri (*The Quick and the Dead*), Joe LoDuca (*Evil Dead*), Oscar and Music Part 2, Recordman's Diary, SPFM Con Report Part 2. \$3  
#57, May 1995, 24 pages. Jerry Goldsmith in concert (again!), Bruce Broughton on *Young Sherlock Holmes*, Miles Goodman, 1994 Readers Poll, *Star Trek*. \$3  
#58, June 1995, 24 pages. Michael Kamen (*Die Hard*), Royal S. Brown (film music critic), Recordman Loves Annette, History of Soundtrack Collecting Part 1. \$3  
#59/60, July/August 1995, 48 pages. Sex Sells Too (silly old sexy LP covers, lots of photos), Maurice Jarre interviewed, Miklós Rózsa Remembered, History of Soundtrack Collecting Part 2, film music in the concert hall, tons of letters and reviews. \$4  
#61, September 1995, 24 pages. Elliot Goldenthal (*Batman Forever*), Michael Kamen part 2, Chris Lennertz (new composer), *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (analysis), classical music for soundtrack fans. \$3



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# MAIL BAG

c/o Lukas Kendall  
Box 1554, Amherst College  
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...I hate to dog these James Horner discussions out any longer, but I feel that during the pointless, childish arguing we've missed something. We've had the rants about him rifling his back-catalog, those about him "borrowing" other composers' works and the endless "James Horner is God," "James Horner is rubbish" statements. What we've missed is much more important: isn't it sad that a composer of Horner's immense ability is reduced to writing uniform slop for films that require so much more? I wonder why it is that, of his recent output, the only scores with any imagination have been for kids' films, and had ones at that. In the meantime, more deserving cases, such as *Braveheart*, are lumbered with a "will this do?" approach.

The point is endlessly made that it works. The cost of hiring James Horner means that it bloody well should. If it didn't he would be out of a job. However, the masters that the composer serves aren't going to realize that generic nothings are bad, because they don't interfere with their movie. Lukas made this point in his review of *Legends of the Fall*, and Horner himself has said something along the same lines. He knows that if he does something unexpected he would have trouble. So he goes for an easy life, producing music that pushes all of the right buttons, and what it lacks in flair, originality or feeling it makes up for with effectiveness. I must admit to liking parts of *Braveheart* and *Legends*, but as 70+ minute albums they end up as background filler, which I can put on whilst working, safe in the knowledge that there isn't much that will distract me.

There are people who believe this stuff to be among his finest work. Anyone who does should stop and think for a second. Endless wallpaper a composer's finest work? It would take a lousy composer for this to be true. But Horner is not a lousy composer. There are many scores which prove this. His early to mid-'80s work is unique and powerful; this is after all where the Horner impersonators go for inspiration, the result being washed out imitations of his finest period. It is unfortunate that a lot of his recent material sounds as if he is doing a second-rate imitation himself. I don't believe that his abilities have diminished any, just his ambitions. He reached the top of his profession a long time ago, and rather than make waves he churns out what he believes people want to hear. Just do as you're told and cash the check. I don't think this is any way for a man at the forefront of his field to behave. A composer who is without doubt one of the most talented working in film today, wasting his time with non-event scores is a tragedy for us all.

Iain Herries  
165 Hyde Park Road  
Leeds LS6 1AH  
England

...I was fascinated—truly, I was—by your notes on *Braveheart* and *First Knight* [59/60]. You tried to make a thorough comparison between the two scores, which is quite the thing I expect from a serious critic such as yourself.

You seem to suffer from this innate, puke-inducing Horneritis—okay, fine.

The most sensible thing for you to do, then, would be to stop buying that Horner crap and spend your time and money on stuff you do like. However, your negative comment has left me under the strange impression that somehow, you don't like film music. You see, this is not just about James Horner, it's about the art form that he is (or, as you would put it, is not) part of. I think the film music sector is still too much of a fledgling to sustain internecine warfare between the precious few people who care to invest time and money into its promotion. Don't you think we should stick together? Don't you think it would be a great help to film composers around the world if we first focused on the good in each score instead of tearing them down? And most importantly, I think it's high time we all started to reflect on the nature of a film score. Is it supposed to have real music value (the "strident, developed music" you speak so highly of) or does its musical identity take a back seat to how it functions in the film? If so, we can finally come to terms with the frustrating knowledge that *no* score can ever achieve the excellence of a self-contained concert piece. I believe that the true genius of film music lies elsewhere. It can be found in the medium it was made for and owes its existence to. Let us all first go to the movies and then—only then!—talk about the score.

Kjell Neckebroek  
Sint-Dinijslaan 103  
9000 Ghent  
Belgium

*Kjell notes he is writing on behalf of Didier Lepretre and the James Horner Society. I agree that film music should be discussed in the context of the film, but I disagree that many of James Horner's current scores are "good" film music in this respect, and have pointed out why in numerous reviews. I also disagree with the notion that we shouldn't criticize film music—if I can't say what I don't like, how is it supposed to mean anything when I say what I do like? (Some Horner scores I like: Wolfen, Sneakers and Brainstorm.) I also don't buy the idea that if I hear something and don't like it, it's somehow my fault for having heard it. But I do welcome Kjell's dissenting opinions—send yours in today.*

...Someone brought it to my attention that there was a section in your interview with me that was run in the last issue that could be taken the wrong way. When I was comparing the older generation and the present day, I was speaking sarcastically and in an exaggerated tone about a handful of composers doing most of the TV shows right now and understandably needing assistance to get it all done. Unfortunately, I don't think that it came across as a general statement. I was not speaking specifically; in fact, I only mentioned the two composers I did off the top of my head because they do a lot of work and I enjoy their music. I apologize to them and I'm truly sorry if anyone got the wrong idea.

Chris Lennertz  
225 4th Ave Suite 102  
Venice CA 90291

...Well, a few comments are in order in response to some of the reactions to the interview with me published in #58 [June]. First of all, Lukas Kendall's interpretations in #59/60 [July/August] of what I really meant when complaining about John Williams's *Star Wars* score are right on. As I think I made clear in my *Fanfare* review of the recent recording of all three *Star Wars* scores, I feel

that Williams composed a hell of a lot of fine music for these films. My problem lies in the be-all/end-all status these scores have acquired both within the movie industry and amongst listeners. As for Paul Andrew MacLean's letter in #61, I offer the following comments:

a) The first example that comes immediately to mind when I say that concert versions of film music often emasculate that music is the two-note cadence that trivializes the closing of Herrmann's *North by Northwest* Overture. Suspending the final seventh chord as the title sequence leads into the first narrative sequence may represent the work of a music editor, but it effectively keeps the music and its relationship to *North by Northwest*'s plot line in an open-ended status. It seems to me that a certain open-ended quality is one of the great strengths of film music as an idiom distinct from pure concert music. Concert versions of film music tend, no doubt in order to move closer to concert-hall aesthetics, to close the open ends.

b) Yes, I did say that "seeing and knowing the film is integral." But that does not mean that I can possibly get to see everything. I have a full-time job as a college professor, which is a good thing, since the amount of money I make on film-music criticism and have made so far from my book would keep my family and me afloat for maybe a month and a half out of every year. Occasionally, I have to resort to purely musical evaluations of a particular score, and since the Goldsmith-scored version of *Legend* was not available to me (not that I tried that hard to get it; *Legend* hardly represents a major point in my book), I described the music as I heard it, which to my ears is nowhere nearly as interesting as Tangerine Dream's. I must say that I shudder, however, to think of a film as goosy as *Legend* further sugar-coated by a score such as Goldsmith's, whereas the Tangerine Dream score was one of the few things the movie had going for it.

c) I do think I have the right, since I do conscientiously get to quite a number of movies (probably an average of six a month in the theaters, not to mention countless rented, taped and purchased videos), to occasionally speculate as to how a score that I find awful might or might not work in a dramatic context. I'm sorry that the composer in question found me "mean." Unlike many journalists, I write in the first person and present my comments strictly as my opinions, which I try to make as informed as possible and in which I try to avoid the kind of groupie shallowness that pervades MacLean's letter.

d) Hey, I never said I was perfect. In *Music for the Movies: Bernard Herrmann*, I called Hitchcock an "Irish" Catholic when I meant "Roman" Catholic, and nobody even caught it. *Overtures and Undertones* has several mistakes (which I am correcting for the forthcoming second printing) that I cannot imagine my not catching, and I have made some whoopers in "Film Musings." The SPFM "address" from (I think) Fall 1994 was an off-the-cuff luncheon-m.c. type of thing I was asked to do at the last minute. Since I cannot take more than five minutes of *The Simpsons* at a time, I called up a well known film-music expert to ask him who did the *Simpsons* music, and Jonathan Sheffer was the answer I got. *Mea maxima culpa* for not having gone out and done hard research on this tremendously important matter for that tremendously important luncheon. And

remembering the name of Goldsmith's son as "Saul" rather than "Joel" obviously makes me incapable of ever saying anything intelligent on the subject of film music. Of course, had MacLean taken the trouble to try and understand what I was saying about *Star Wars* rather than defending what appears to be his extremely limited turf, he would have seen that I was not attacking people for not being able to distinguish between *Kings* (not King's) *Row* and *Superman* but rather lamenting the fact that Korgold et al. got buried beneath the *Star Wars* onslaught, which proved to be one of Hollywood's best marketing ploys in years. By the way, the worst thing about Laurie Johnson's *North by Northwest* recording is that the "On the Rocks" cue got replaced by a reprise of the Overture.

Royal S. Brown  
Address Insistently Withheld

## Desert Island Movies: It Begins

This is a new mini-feature where readers send in their top ten lists of great movies with great scores. 1) We're talking synergy: no bad scores in good movies, no good movies with bad scores. 2) Don't feel compelled to list the director or year of release. 3) Refrain from lengthy comments, there isn't enough room. 4) Include your year of birth (optional), so we can verify certain theories. Fittingly, our first two lists come from...

Royal S. Brown, born 1940:

King Kong (1933, d. Merian D. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack), Max Steiner.  
The Sea Hawk (1940, Michael Curtiz), Erich Wolfgang Korngold.  
Double Indemnity (1944, Billy Wilder), Miklós Rózsa.  
Ivan the Terrible (1943/46, Sergei Eisenstein), Sergei Prokofiev.  
Pierrot le fou (1965, Jean-Luc Godard), Antoine Duhamel.  
Vertigo (1958, Alfred Hitchcock), Bernard Herrmann.  
Duck You Sucker (1972, Sergio Leone), Ennio Morricone.  
Ran (1985, Akira Kurosawa), Toru Takemitsu.  
Juliet of the Spirits (1965, Federico Fellini), Nino Rota.  
Images (1972, Robert Altman), John Williams.

Paul Andrew MacLean, b. he won't say:

Lawrence of Arabia (1962, d. David Lean), Maurice Jarre.  
Nicholas and Alexandra (1971, Franklin Schaffner), Richard Rodney Bennett.  
A Man For All Seasons (1966, Fred Zinnemann), Georges Delerue.  
Scott of the Antarctic (1948, Charles Frend), Ralph Vaughan Williams.  
Romeo and Juliet (1968, Franco Zeffirelli), Nino Rota.  
The Devils (1971, Ken Russell), Peter Maxwell Davies.  
Ran (1985, Akira Kurosawa), Toru Takemitsu.  
Day for Night (1973, François Truffaut), Georges Delerue.  
Fahrenheit 451 (1966, François Truffaut), Bernard Herrmann.  
Chinatown (1974, Roman Polanski), Jerry Goldsmith.  
Jesus of Nazareth (1977, Franco Zeffirelli), Maurice Jarre.  
The Mission (1985, Roland Joffe), Ennio Morricone.  
The Lion in Winter (1968, Anthony Harvey), John Barry.  
Cry Freedom (1987, R. Attenborough), George Fenton and Jonas Gwangwa.

Many more lists next month! *Ten films only* (I mean it!)—Paul gets to cheat because he got picked on this issue.



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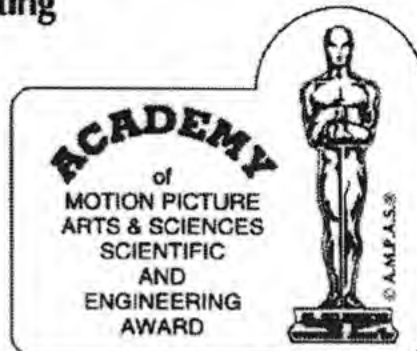
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### READER ADS

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#### WANTED

**Nick D'Orazio** (95 Hill St, Bloomfield NJ 07003-4721; ph: 201-748-1026) wants on CD or LP: John Barry: *Follow Me, Hearts of Fire, Golden Child*.

**Robert Fisch** (101 West 12th St, Apt 11-E, New York NY 10011; ph: 212-633-1795) seeks "Oceania tis for Thee" and "The Hiking Song" from the 1980s production of George Orwell's *1984*. This music is *not* on the Eurythmics soundtrack CD. Info on existence/availability of these songs appreciated.

**Clément Fontaine** from Disques CinéMusique (4426 Ernest-Gendreau Street, Montréal, Québec H1X 3J3, Canada; ph/fax: 514-522-9590) is seeking a mint or near mint CD of *Follow Me* by John Barry. Tell what CD(s) or how much money you want in return.

**Christian Frisch** (Rienznern Weg 6, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria, Europe) is buying every soundtrack on CD, LP, MC etc. he doesn't own yet, no matter what it is (brand new, out-of-print, unreleased or whatever). Sale/want/trade lists from everywhere and everybody welcome. Wanted: *Captain Ron, Tail Spin, Richard Bellis Promo, David &*

*Eric Wurst Promos*, etc.

**Robert A. Mickiewicz** (7 Whittemore Terrace, Boston MA 02125; ph: 617-825-7583) wants: *Back Street* (1941 version, F. Skinner, 78rpm set), *House of Seven Gables* (F. Skinner, 78rpm set), *Bill and Co* (L. Newman, Mercury MMP-20, 78rpm), "Vitaphone" synchronized discs from 1920s/30s. He will buy or trade from extensive collection. Looking for worldwide trading contacts to acquire import soundtracks and shows; obscure, private, promo-only material; studio-only material, etc. All want/sale/trade lists welcome.

**Jim Powley** (494 Lakeshore Rd W, Oakville, Ontario L6K 1G5, Canada; ph: 905-842-0567) is searching for French Delerue issues of *Chouans!* (CD only); *La Revolution Française* (LP and CD); promotional CDs of Broughton's *Baby's Day Out* and Babcock's *Orchestral Music for Film*.

**Margaret Ross** (1 Ash Rd, Bebington, Wirral L63 8PH, England; ph: 0151-645-9838) wants on CD: the black-and-white music-only promo disc to *Apollo 13* (Horner), 2CD set *Film Music of Alan Silvestri, Le Complot* (Delerue), *Chouans* (Delerue), *Lonely Passion of Judith Hearn* (Delerue), *Grand Prix* (Jarre), *Tokyo Blackout* (aka *City Blackout*, Jarre), *Knights of the Round Table* (Rózsa), *Quo Vadis* (Rózsa, no dialogue), *King Kong Lives* (Scott), *The Penitent* (North), *Tail Spin* (Stone), *Les Corps Celestes* (Sarde), *La Baule*, *Les Pins* (Sarde), *Captain Ron* (Pike), *DOA* (Jankel), *Georg Elser Einer aus Deutschland* (Delerue). Will trade from extensive collection of many hard-to-find CDs and promos. Send for list.

#### FOR SALE/TRADE

**M. Lim** (1255 Univ. Ave. #327, Sacramento CA 95825) has for sale the fol-



lowing CDs (all still sealed; add \$2 for postage, 50¢ for ea. add'l.): *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Guns of Navarone* (both Tiomkin, Sony Japan imports, ea. \$14), *Return to Oz* (Shire, \$15, notched cut-out), *Bab El Qued City* (Rachid Bahri, \$12, notched), TV's *Greatest Hits, Vol. 1* (TVToons, 65 tracks, \$13). Also, some sealed cassettes and CDs. Write for free list (SASE please).

**Bob Ritschel** (2933 Avenida Valera, Carlsbad CA 92009; ph: 619-930-0616; fax: 619-930-0223) has a set sale list of used LPs now available (good stuff cheap!). Write for a copy.

#### FOR SALE/TRADE & WANTED

**Owen T. Cunningham** (3 South Rd. Ellington CT 06029-3029) has for sale an unusual, "extremely hard-to-find" item for Patrick Doyle fans. Write if interested. CDs for trade: *Une Femme française* (Doyle), *V: The Final Battle* (McCarthy), *Dragonslayer* (North), *The Rapture* (T. Newman). \*batteries not included (Horner), *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (Fielding), *People Under the Stairs* (Revell/Peake). CDs for sale: *Extreme Prejudice* (Goldsmith, \$10), *Subway* (Serra, \$15), *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (Goldsmith \$20). Wanted on CD: *The Last Starfighter* (Safan), *Witches of Eastwick* (Williams), *Die Hard* (Kamen), *Cherry 2000* (Pole-

douris), *Apollo 13* promo (Horner).

**Jason Foster** (PO Box 16230, ASU, Boone NC 28608; E-mail: JF14704@conrad.appstate.edu) is looking for CDs of *A Time of Destiny* (Morricone) and *The 'Burbs* (Goldsmith). Has for sale/trade a number of out-of-print, rare CDs, write for a list.

**Robert Knaus** (320 Fisher St, Walpole MA 02081; ph: 508-668-9398) has James Horner CDs for sale: *The Name of the Rose* (Teldec, \$40), *Class Action*, *Red Heat*, *Dad* (\$20 ea.), *Once Around*, *Where the River Runs Black* (\$15 ea.), *Thunderheart*, *Unlawful Entry* (\$6 ea.). Wanted: *Lonely Guy* (Goldsmith), *Watership Down* (Morley) Tape dubs OK.

**Chris Shaneyfelt** (PO Box 6717, Grove OK 74344; fax: 918-786-7585) wants *Baby's Day Out* on CD (Broughton). For trade only: CD of *Uncommon Valor* (Horner). For sale: \$40: *Dragon-slayer*. At \$6 each: *Red Heat*, *Forrest Gump*, *Back to the Future II*, *Back to the Future III*, *The Untouchables*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Polydor). At \$5 each: *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, *True Lies*, *Schindler's List*, *Keeper of the City*. At \$4: *Beastmaster 2*, *Bright Angel*. Postage: \$1.50 1st disc, 25¢ ea. add'l (4th class); or \$3 1st disc, 50¢ ea. add'l (priority/first class insured).

# JOHN OTTMAN

## THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Interview by Mike Shapiro

John Ottman is an anomaly amongst a business of anomalies: a film editor who became a film composer. His background as a filmmaker, as well as his astounding knowledge of film music history, gives him a perspective that few other composers can boast—and it shows. John acted in both roles on the recent box-office hit *The Usual Suspects*, and his score is both musically captivating and perfectly suited for the visuals.

John lives tucked away in an unobtrusive but elegant apartment in West Hollywood, where, if you crane your head out the window, you can just see the billboard ad for *The Usual Suspects* peeking over the buildings on Sunset Blvd....

**Mike Shapiro:** Tell us a little about your background... ("who is this guy? People wanna know...") both musically, and how you came into film scoring.

**John Ottman:** I began playing the clarinet in grade school, only because, like most kids, I resisted piano lessons. But that was about the extent of my "musicality." Playing an instrument and being in band was always secondary to my desire to create radio plays on cassette, and also write and direct lavish super-8 film productions, often with big sets constructed in my parents' garage. Instead of editing the films to music, I would extensively edit film scores to the picture. So, in a sense, I was "scoring" my films with music by Goldsmith, Williams, Horner and so on, much the same way music editors temp-score features. This "scoring" phase of my films was the part I looked forward to the most, and was often the very reason I was making the films. I could pretend the likes of John Williams were scoring my movies.

To make a long story short, I ended up going to USC film school where I was recognized for my editing and directing. In my second year I was asked by a graduate student to re-edit his problem-plagued thesis project. It was on that film I met Bryan Singer, who was a production assistant. After extensive reconstructive surgery on the film's story, it ended up winning the student Academy Award for that year. So I became this "editor" in demand, yet it wasn't really my career goal. Editing had always been second nature to me, considering the plethora of films I made as a kid through college. Upon graduating, I soon realized that with every project I did, it was film music that was the impetus behind my work. So, as a hobby I built a make-shift studio in my house with used Midi equipment and began re-scoring my friends' horribly-scored student films as an experiment, just to see if I could

actually do this. Not being classically trained, yet having melodies and musical concepts in my head, the miracle of Midi technology allowed me to perform these with synth, and create orchestral sounding music by carefully building and shaping tracks. My first film was *The Burrito from Hell*, which I did in a '50s monster movie style. I had such a blast that soon I was scoring short films and industrials like Ampeco Parking and Kwikset Locks, as a hobby and training. At the same time I continued editing for people, including Bryan Singer's short, *Lion's Den*. He wasn't convinced of my scoring abilities at that time, since all he had heard were cues from ridiculous little projects. But then on *Public Access*, his first feature, we lost the composer on the film, and the score had to be done in less than three weeks. There I was, the guy who had labored blood, sweat and tears editing the film—with a full time job—for a couple months, the guy who lived and breathed this thing. I was drooling to score it, and I knew what I wanted to do ever since I began putting it together. So he gave me a try. And thus our editing/composing system was born. The film really was a showpiece for me because many sequences were purely an interplay of wild editing techniques and music.

**MS:** How did you score the film?

**JO:** I had no computer at the time, just a little Roland MC300 sequencer. Thank God I had just bought a couple Proteus sound modules for a short film I scored just prior to *Public Access*. They, along with my D70 keyboard—and a lot of tracks—gave us a pretty convincing sound. I wanted to open the film's theme with a solo guitar, but the synth guitar sounded like a harpsichord; so the recording engineer would set the controls, run into the studio and re-play my synth guitar part with his own guitar, which really made the rest of the score very convincing.

**MS:** Have you worked primarily for Bryan since that point?

**JO:** I re-scored a John Wayne classic called *McLintock!*, which was a very strange project indeed. Apparently, the company re-releasing the film for video couldn't get the rights to Frank DeVol's music, so they looked for someone who could deliver the big sound of a symphony for dirt cheap. Moi. I had to do an hour and ten minutes of music, including all source cues, in less than three weeks—that seems to be the amount of time I keep getting. The funny part about the story is that because the old score was married to all the film's production and dialogue tracks, the entire film had to be re-dubbed with other actors and all the sound completely re-created. A lot to go through simply to replace the score. I also did a "heartfelt" kind of score for a documentary



about autism, a Nike spot, and a few other short subject films. The frustration was creating all that music—which I poured myself into—only for it never to be heard by many people. It just sits on a shelf in my studio.

**MS:** Public Access wasn't released.

**JO:** Strangely enough, no. But I'm hoping that if *The Usual Suspects* is successful enough, that interest in *Public Access* will heighten enough for a limited run. It was quite a good film, very disturbing, dark and twisted. It had a real intelligence and showed an incredible amount of resourcefulness on such a low budget. Overseas, one critic referred to it as the best American film of the year, which I thought was a perfect quote to use on a video box. But it didn't even get that far. I hope it's because the distribution company is holding out for a theatrical run.

**MS:** On Bryan's films you serve as both editor and composer. How do the two roles interact?

**JO:** Bryan's films have always been a sort of study of the characters, very introspective, often backdropped in some strange world. Given that, I would hate to be the composer brought in cold to score such projects. By being so involved emotionally as the editor and creating these characters over a period of weeks or months, it is easier for me to be more insightful with the score, versus superficial. The benefit is a better thought-out score emerging from within the film, as opposed to covering over the surface. There's not a night during the editing process that I don't toss and turn in a swirl of musical ideas—ideas that I can do nothing about until the scoring begins. It's very frustrating. So once the scoring process starts, I'm like a race horse out of the gate.

**MS:** Do you actually start to develop the thematic material while editing?



**JO:** Not normally. Not immediately. Once I've been editing for a month and a half or so, I start getting an idea of the score's tone. But physically it's impossible to begin writing any musical themes. We have never had the luxury of relaxed editing schedules because the budgets of our films have demanded that we cram five months of editing into three. I was basically editing 13-hour days, seven days a week. Once in a while I managed to squeeze in some studio time and start experimenting with themes. I think my theme to *The Usual Suspects* went through four versions before I was ready to have Bryan hear it. But there were a couple of instances where I knew conceptually how the score needed to be as I was constructing a sequence.

There's one scene in the film where a 747 lands ("New York's Finest" on the CD). Simply having it land would be so typical, so I jump-cut it, giving a very strange feel to the scene. But I knew these jump-cuts would have to work with the score—my hits on the music would have to be exact. So this was one of the few instances where I used a click track to make sure my editorial timings were on a beat.

**MS:** How would you describe the stylistic approach you chose? It seemed to be a combination of several different elements.

**JO:** Maybe, but I think it's all within a pretty traditional orchestral context, despite some strange techniques I used. My main approach was to ensure that this film had class and richness. The expectation of a film entitled *The Usual Suspects* is that a more hip, contemporary score would be the thing to do. But Bryan and I both saw eye to eye that this was a film about dispelling expectations, and from the moment the theme begins, the audience is immediately keyed in that this is going to be something they didn't expect.

Also, Bryan, Chris (the writer) and I deeply respect and miss the filmmaking style and quality of films of the '60s, '70s and early '80s. Some of our favorite films stemmed from this time, as well as some of the most brilliant scores—real scores. Consequently, *The Usual Suspects* is a sort of homage to scores of recent days gone by. The films of that time were generally better written and better developed than most of today's. That, coupled with the fact that composers were given more time to write, created more coherent and more fully developed scores.

**MS:** Who in particular are your super-heroes from that period?

**JO:** Goldsmith. Some newcomers to this man's work might scoff at my worship of him because he's done so many poor films in the last ten years or so. But to really know Goldsmith's repertoire is to be astounded. My assistant is only 21, so I forced him to listen to scores like *Alien* and *Masada*, etc. He was mesmerized by them and their detail and their freshness. It's a style and detailed quality of music that is not as pervasive today. I love so many other composers too, from Barry to Bernstein, each offering something very unique to the field.

**MS:** Were there surprises at the scoring session?

**JO:** I was prepared for a train wreck at every turn, but things couldn't have gone smoother. I guess the biggest surprise was how good everything sounded, and at the same time, how close the orchestra sounded to my synthed versions. The Proteus instruments sound so good, that they gave me a very comfortable feel for how it would sound for real.

One problem we had, however, was the fact that the studio we used had a little Yamaha piano, which is what I walked over immediately to start playing the film's theme—a theme basically driven by piano. One hit on a key and I knew I

was in trouble. The theme needed to sound elegant, and this thing sounded too bright. So we scrambled to try and find a larger piano. We were in San Diego, so it wasn't easy. Finally we found a company that could deliver a Steinway for a day. We had been behind recording other instruments on our piano day, and it had to go the next morning. At about midnight, after having gotten through the opening and ending titles, our pianist had to go, so my assistant took over and we laid down piano until six the next morning. He did great, but occasionally, out of fatigue, he would flub up here in there; but we just pressed on and buried any errors in the mix.

**MS:** Given that you're taking this big step into the large-scale film scoring world, what kind of projects would you like to score stylistically?

**JO:** I would love to do a *Dances with Wolves* kind of score—sweeping vistas, emotional themes, etc. At the same time, I have a comfort and excitement doing big action music or dark, creepy stuff—all within an intelligent orchestral context. I would also love to do some epic—or a big science fiction film. I am blessed to have had *The Usual Suspects* be my first big score because of the variety of styles within this one piece of work—thus it's good calling card for me.

**MS:** I'm kind of curious. You mentioned to me that there were some weird instrumental effects thrown in now and then, like the guiro I think. Were these off-the-cuff experimentations or...?

**JO:** Never. Never. Perhaps if the studio time was free and we had a relaxed schedule to keep, but in a frenzy, everything's got to be thought-out and prepared ahead of time. Besides I'm way too paranoid to depend upon what I might come up with fooling around in the studio. I would definitely like to do that when I can; however, in this score, there could be no errors. Every single sound layer and every percussive instrument was completely calculated. That goes for the guiro, for example (in the cue "The Garage"); yet it was still exciting to hear how great it sounded for real. By the way, in that same cue, if you listen carefully, you will hear light strumming of piano wires. These were the fingers of Bryan Singer at two in the morning.

**MS:** When you're writing stuff in your studio, do you just sequence it in as you see the picture?

**JO:** Well, God knows if I have been the editor, I've seen the film about a million times by the time I'm ready to score it. I can recite the dialogue in my sleep. If I haven't edited the film, I watch it a couple of times and sleep on it. I then go at it by watching each scene that I feel should be scored, and then preparing these scenes for scoring. I first decide a general tempo, then extensively "catalog" each action or event by marking what measure or beat it occurs. After that, I basically turn the video off and write the cue based upon my notes and general memory of the scene. I get through the whole scene, creating a sort of awful sounding skeleton of the cue. I'll then interlock it with the video again, and see how I did. If everything hits and the flow is working, I'll turn off the video again, and orchestrate like hell—which is actually my favorite part of the process. To me, this is the most crucial phase because what bells and whistles and textures I add is my personality or style as a composer. I couldn't conceive of handing a bare skeleton of a cue over to an orchestrator. It would be impossible for the orchestrator to completely anticipate my concept for the scene. A talented orchestrator is great for filling in any areas I may have neglected, like more bottom-end here, fleshing out brass lines, doubling things with a few other instruments there, adding some interesting accompaniment, and so on. After a while,

he'll be able to understand how I think musically, and take more liberties with the music, which I welcome. It's my worst fear, however, that there will be some project where I have to write two hours of music in some ridiculous time frame and I'm forced to dole out my work to an armada of orchestrators just to get it done. I hope I can avoid such nightmarish scenarios. We'll see....

**MS:** Is your interface just yourself on the keyboard? Do you sequence in real time, or do you edit statically after that?

**JO:** I'm all alone in that little room. But I'm Mr. Butterfingers on the keyboard (should have taken those piano lessons), so, yeah, I'll go in there and edit notes with the mouse. But most of the time, I'd rather slow the tempo down and perform the cue so that my notes are more on the beats in order to avoid having to go in and edit all my mistakes later. For very fast things like glisses and what I call "string swirls" (like in the cue, "Getting Aboard"), I'll just butterfinger them. For the director, this "mess" can be worrisome, so I describe what it will sound like, or strum my fingers across the keyboard to give him an idea. I say, "trust me." Then I go to bed worried, hoping the hell it will sound like the way I described!

**MS:** So your musical background is formally just lessons in high school. You seem to have intuitively grasped the art of film music writing.

**JO:** I guess most of my music education came from attending performances of my favorite works, and that's how I learned a lot about orchestration. I would go to the symphony in my home town (San Jose) looking wide-eyed at the ensemble the whole time. After hearing a work, say Dvorak's 9th, for years and then finally seeing it performed I was witnessing how textures were created. When I began writing film scores, I would actually take out my *Music: An Appreciation* book and open it to the page which showed the layout of the orchestra, keeping the scenario in mind as I wrote. So I may have been in front of an electronic keyboard, but in my mind, I was sitting in the middle of an ensemble. I guess I still put myself in that sort of mental state when writing now. The other way I learned was simply to fill my head with oodles of film scores. In fact, scores and classical music is about all I listen to, which is an advantage and hindrance at the same time. The advantage is that when I see a raw scene in a film, my mental catalog of film and classical music immediately gives me an idea of what I need to do. The drawback, I guess, is when I'm sitting in the car with one of my friends and there's some song playing on the radio or a CD, I have no idea what it is. And perhaps I shouldn't admit this, but I feel the original *Star Trek* series was responsible for a lot. It not only got me interested in science fiction, which then lead me into the film world via *Star Wars*, but the *Star Trek* series showed how the same music could be adapted and extensively edited and re-organized to score a myriad of different scenarios. It was great music, some of its use is quite dated and overly dramatic today, but it was great stuff. You rarely hear that sort of compositional effort and care in today's television series.

**MS:** In the future do you see yourself more as a film editor or film composer?

**JO:** Film editing will always be in my blood, but film composing is my real passion—and I think I have a knack for it as well because of how closely I have tied it to the editing in all of my projects. I'm getting offers to edit major pictures, and I'm saying no to them. That's scary, but I don't want to be considered an editor who dabbles in film music; rather, I want to be considered a film composer who happens to be a good editor. With Bryan Singer's films, you'll always





Left: Kevin Spacey as the crippled con man, Verbal. Right: The film's opening line-up of "usual suspects."

see me doing both, because he won't let me score unless I edit, and I won't edit unless I can score. I think the outcome is something rather unique, so we both see the merit in it. My only concern is that editing keeps me out of the scoring loop for a few months, and I might miss projects I would love to score. That's frustrating, but I also value my unique dual role on Singer projects.

**MS:** Do you write independent pieces of music separate from film?

**JO:** I used to write suites and pieces of music just for kicks and to explore certain musical styles, but I don't seem to have the time for that lately. But part of the advantage to having done larger, yet unknown projects such as *McLintock!* is that they served not only as devices for me to prospect new writing techniques, but they were also guinea pigs in terms of showing myself how much music I can write in a certain amount of time. So when I was faced with three weeks to write the score to *The Usual Suspects* I knew I could pull it off because I had written an hour and ten minutes for *McLintock!* in that same amount of time. It seems I am haunted by this three-week thing. That's all I had for *Public Access* as well. Anything less would be inhuman, yet I know it happens. I just don't want to hear about it because it scares the hell out of me. Sometimes the film music process seems to resemble a meat factory where scores are churned out like hot dogs. Yet the music is often a film's last great hope of bettering itself.

**MS:** You seem to do a lot of things compositionally that other composers seem to grow into, such as re-using themes in different ways to heighten continuity.

**JO:** Well, it's what traditional film scores have always done. In the last 25 years or so we've toned down the overtiness of just how these recurring themes are used, yet to me, this concept is the cornerstone of a good score. I have a real reverence for what to me are the "real film scores" because of their careful attention to character and motifs. I guess I'm in that kind of mind-set because that's the kind of score that turns me on. Not that today's film scores don't employ this technique, yet many seem to have strayed, using looser motifs and less precise concepts to carry the score. And of course, it certainly depends upon the film. Overall I would say that films of the last ten years or so lack the story integrity that films had, and the score is often affected by this in terms of its own development. Sometimes the films don't warrant such a traditional approach, and the music serves less as a story-telling element and more as an overriding atmosphere. Yet I have seen many films which,

in my opinion, would have benefited by stronger narrative-style scores as opposed to this new-age, atmospheric, sort of Tangerine Dream approach. In terms of character themes, *The Usual Suspects* was tough for me because it's a film about events and five characters whose actions and fate are all controlled by one man, Keyser Söze. Therefore, thematically I used one main theme and altered it for the major characters, and the actions in which they partake. In fact, if you listen to some of the action-oriented music, such as "New York's Finest," it's really the film's main theme twisted around; after all, it is Keyser who is pulling all of their strings. Of course, there were secondary motifs introduced as well, like the "heist music" and "Kobayashi," a mysterious theme when Keyser is talked about, and then just straight, fun action stuff not rooted with any theme at all, except its own. But I tried to remain as traditional in my approach as possible within a very bizarre film structure.

**MS:** How much synth did you use in the score to *The Usual Suspects*?

**JO:** Not much, really. Finally I got to do a score where I could use more orchestra than synth! We didn't have the time and resources to incorporate a couple strange percussive instruments, so I had to replace them with sampled versions, and here and there I brought in some strange textural sounds to add an edge of eeriness. I think many composers, like Goldsmith, have shown that synth is a legitimate section of the orchestra, yet sometimes I feel guilty simply turning to synth to make things otherworldly or strange. Before the advent of synth technology, scores like *Planet of the Apes* used incredibly strange textures by pushing the envelope with acoustic instruments. That takes a vast knowledge of the unconventional things instruments can do, but it's something I would like to learn. I'll feel more proud of my work if I can do that.

**MS:** So do you think you'll get to the point where it's all acoustic?

**JO:** Depends upon the film. If I were doing *Black Beauty*, of course. But I don't know. I go see a film like *The Shawshank Redemption*, which is basically orchestral, yet way in the background some electronic pads are integrated within the strings to add a strange quality the orchestra could never emulate. I respect that a great deal, and it drives me nuts because I want to know what sound the composer is using. Where did he get that?! I want it! Thus, I went out and bought a bunch of equipment to try and create my own, but sometimes creating those textures electronically can be as time-consuming as researching how the orchestra could do it. So, to

answer your question, unless it's a period piece, my scores will always have some sort of electronics lurking somewhere.

**MS:** Talking about how being the editor gives you an additional edge to working on a project, do you find it easier to work with the director and producers?

**JO:** Well, the editor is a very intimate and integral part of the film who has given birth to this thing after having nurtured it for months. So naturally, there's a real trust factor going on that may not be there if I were some composer coming in from the outside. When you've worked on creating something for so long, it becomes a real mission to ensure that this film's music is going to be the best it can be—to bring out every moment and nuance we created in the film. Our reputations are on the line, and we've invested so much time in it, none of us want it to be in vain. And talking about exposing oneself for criticism, I'm under twice the pressure to make sure the film is working well on both an editorial and musical level, or else my name is Mud. I'm not really thinking about that when I'm on the project, but when we're done, I worry that editors won't take me seriously as an editor because I did the score, and more worrisome, that composers won't take me seriously as a composer because I edited the film. However, to my delight, I've had nothing but support from both sides. So perhaps there's hope that I won't be an outcast after all. Basically, I think every film composer would love to be involved in the editing, and most editors involved in the scoring. But practically speaking, especially considering the fanatically squeezed post-production schedules, this is usually impossible.

The drawback of editing for me is the fact that I'm out of the loop for a couple months. If the film has a big budget, the editing process could last for months; therefore I will only be editing Singer films. The result of having edited the film, of course, is a better score for me to put out there, but there will be less of them.

My pitch is that I come to a project with the mind of a filmmaker. Not that other composers don't—I think the best composers are essentially good filmmakers—but because I came from a filmmaking background I come to a film with perhaps a little different sensibility. I see my score as simply another illusion of filmmaking like editing, lighting, sets, etc. Therefore, I have no qualms about recording a score in an unconventional way—as long as the final recording sounds good and works for the film. A score can be an illusion just like everything else in a film.

**MS:** So what's down the pike?





Left: McManus (Stephen Baldwin), Keaton (Gabriel Byrne), Hockney (Kevin Pollack). Right: Confronting Kobayashi (Pete Postlethwaite).

**JO:** Knock on wood, if all goes according to plan, I'll be scoring at least one segment of a Miramax science fiction anthology film called *Lightyears*. The story I know I will be doing will be directed by Bryan, so, of course, that means I'll be editing. His segment is called "The Last Question," based upon an Isaac Asimov story concerning the end of the universe. It's executive produced by Michael Phillips, who produced *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and you know who scored that. Shakin' in my boots. After that, Bryan's got a film in the works based upon a Stephen King story. So there's stuff ahead, but I would like to try and score a project between Singer films. I love working with Bryan, and always will, but, you know, I've got to break the umbilical chord at some point!

**MS:** So *The Last Question*, dealing with the end of the universe, will warrant a large group?

**JO:** We're talking about the end of everything. Gigantic. Choral music, brass, Holst-city. But you'd be amazed how you have to convince them that a big score is warranted! The original music budget was \$30,000. That was so outlandish I simply laughed. Since then we have tripled it, but we're still going to have to make it sound bigger than it really is, which I'm used to.

**MS:** Do you find any other areas of media scoring to be of interest?

**JO:** Nothing will compare to scoring a film, but I did dabble in scoring a CD-ROM project called (are you ready for this?) *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*. I was hired because the company wanted someone who thought like a film composer to score the project as if it were a film. There were five characters, each having to have three themes each. When all was said and done it was over hour of music. It was less pressure than a film, and it was fun, but the drawbacks are that all that music will never be heard on any CD, and the music you will hear has now been "computerized" to emulate through people's PC sound emulators. Yuck.

**MS:** Have you ever had to deal with another composer on a project on which you were a filmmaker?

**JO:** On smaller films I did at USC, and it was either a pleasurable experience where I learned a lot about scoring from the composer, or a very frustrating experience. It depended upon the composer, and I guess, how well we agreed or worked together.

**MS:** You've also done a lot of larger scope student films at USC... *Alive* and *Kicking*?

**JO:** I decided that since I want to score big films, I would do "big" student projects. *Alive*

and *Kicking* was a kind of military-style, wacky score, much like *1941*. It was a blast to do very serious, aggressive military music for this comedy, much in the way Elmer Bernstein seriously scored *Airplane!* for comedic effect. One thing about student films is that no one may ever hear your work, but you create a little library of music for yourself that perhaps one day you can draw from for inspiration. I have written a couple other themes to no particular film at all that I'm dying to use some day.

**MS:** But you write every theme specially for the movie on the spot, of course.

**JO:** Of course. But there are these couple themes I've written that need to find a film.

**MS:** You seem to have defined for yourself a musical style. Do you think Bryan's films elicit that style?

**JO:** To a point, certainly. His movies, so far, have been pseudo-art films that delve deeply into character. We had to find a way to make these films more accessible to the audience, and the score played a large role in that. The score's role is to bring a little Hollywood to the films; the end result is a film which is a sort of amalgam of Hollywood and art. That's a real strength behind our films, I think. That's why Bryan gives me great latitude in the editing room to try and milk scenes dramatically and create huge musical sequences to keep the film engaging for all.

**MS:** Is it to parallel that kind of mixture in your scoring?

**JO:** Absolutely. The fringe benefit of this kind of approach to filmmaking and scoring is that the score can't be too Hollywood, because nonetheless, it's still an artistic and intelligent film. So as a result of working on a Singer film, the music ends up sounding more suave, refined. It keeps me in check from doing something too flashy or corny, yet it has to be bold... It's a fine line I balance on all the time.

**MS:** How did you work with the music editor in terms of how the temp score was designed?

**JO:** I didn't want a music editor. My editor was brought on after the scoring session. So it was me and my soundtrack collection that temp-scored the movie. The producers were insistent I hire an editor to do it, but I knew what the color and style needed to be. So I gave it a try. Bryan, whose first feature I also temp-scored, and then ended up scoring, endorsed my doing it. The irony is that my own temp score often came back to haunt me in terms of Bryan falling in love with many cues. But, at least I agreed with his passion, since I had chosen the music.

**MS:** How do you feel the music sounds in the

final mix? Were you involved in that?

**JO:** I'm very fortunate that the score is very featured in the film. Films today seem to be going sound effects crazy, when it's often the case that the music is the element that should be carrying the scenes for the film's cohesiveness. Once again, films just 15 years ago knew the strength in this. I mean, look at the big chase scene in *Outland*. Music is featured, effects are supportive. And it worked marvelously. Because Bryan, Chris and I all revere films of that era, we held true to them all the way through to the mix. Of course, having the music mixed too loud in a scene can be equally as frustrating and embarrassing, if it is meant to be subtle. There were a couple areas where I would have liked the music to be a tad higher, but I can't complain about a very good mix. There were some scenes that were completely constructed for score, like when the camera dollies away from the porthole—an extremely dramatic scene. All effects were dropped, and it's just score. (As the editor, I made sure that would happen!)

I was very involved in the mix; being the editor helps add legitimacy to my being at the mix as a composer. As long as I could convince them that I was there as the editor and not so much the composer wanting the music blasting in every scene, I had a lot of creative input. I was really expecting the mix to be a bloodbath, but it really went incredibly well.

**MS:** Did you have any experience with an orchestra prior to *The Usual Suspects*?

**JO:** I had a little experience with some library music I wrote for a company down in San Diego. The main composer of the company's music, Larry Groupe, heard my demo tape, which included my score from *Public Access*. He asked me if I was interested in writing a cue, and knowing it would be with real players, I jumped at the chance. The problem was that I didn't even have a computer. So this project gave me the impetus to get set up with Performer (my music writing software). Technically, I stumbled along the way, but with manuals in hand, and some help from Larry, it all worked out. His motive was that perhaps one day I would get a film and hire him as my orchestrator and/or conductor. It was great a couple of years later to be able to give him a call and say, "Well, here we go."

**MS:** How old are you?

**JO:** Well I'm not 26, like James Horner was when he did *Battle Beyond the Stars*! And I'm not 30, which is what he was when he did *Brainstorm* with the London Symphony. I'm 31. Sigh. But we finished the film a year ago, so I can say I was 30. Okay, I feel better now.



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## Film Music Masters: JERRY GOLDSMITH

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Documentary Review by LUKAS KENDALL

A pitfall of soundtrack collecting is that while the music can become intimately familiar, the composer can remain, even after 30 years, little more than a disembodied name. Who is Jerry Goldsmith? What does he have to say? How does he go about his business? Biographical and pictorial information can be disseminated, concerts and radio interviews traded around, but the mystification can only become more intense. This year, however, it'll be a happy holiday season for Jerry Goldsmith fans with this audio-visual/textual package, the most comprehensive of its kind yet. Time to blow your \$100!

Karlin/Tilford Productions' new collector-market video, *Film Music Masters: Jerry Goldsmith*, is a watchable documentary in addition to being a carrier of Jerry-waves. It's 70 minutes long without a narrator, so Goldsmith's own musings, pieced together from different sources (you can hear when the tape changes), carry the show. It's rather loosely structured, bookended by its weakest element, the recording session of *The River Wild* (1994). On one hand it's vital that we see Goldsmith actually conduct and produce his music, but this Meryl Streep action picture is just so lame, and its score almost a parody of what Goldsmith does—muzaky main theme interspersed with stock, rhythmic action music—that it's inevitably a drag each time we return to it.

Outside of *The River Wild*, however, there are gems a-plenty, owing to Karlin's resourcefulness in digging up archival footage, interviewing relevant filmmakers, and licensing clips from the movies in question—a long and expensive process which took a year and lots of money (hence the \$100 price tag). The film is competently shot and edited, without fannish camcorder angles. The structure is not chronological, but is more or less a train-of-thought from one major picture to another, embellished by Goldsmith's comments, somebody else's words of wisdom, and usually a clip or two—either an actual scene or a montage of footage with the music's main theme playing over it. This treatment is given to *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *The Wind and the Lion*, *The Omen* (with director Richard Donner;

Goldsmith's 1976 Oscar acceptance speech is also included), *Poltergeist*, *Patton* (with archival footage of the late Franklin J. Schaffner), *Planet of the Apes* (with son Joel Goldsmith), *Islands in the Stream* (also with Schaffner), *Basic Instinct* (with agent Richard Kraft and director Paul Verhoeven), *Medicine Man*, *Under Fire*, and *The Russia House* (with Branford Marsalis and Sandy De Crescent). (Some of the Schaffner material is accompanied by 1987 footage of Goldsmith, apparently from when the two were doing *Lionheart* and the Intrada re-recording of *Islands in the Stream*.) Along the way we get a pretty solid education of what goes into scoring a film, how these particular pictures were approached, and why Goldsmith is so great. There are obviously many films not mentioned—say, 130 of them, and very little in the way of *Rambo*-style action and *Alien* gore, which the composer personally dislikes—but Karlin has made generally good choices. The segment with Kraft and Verhoeven on *Basic Instinct* is particularly enlightening; too bad such artistry and conviction went into such dumb subject matter.

The film's highlight is its middle section, the "second act," with priceless archival footage. We flash back—twice—to Goldsmith's early days: first we are shown how he started on live television, and then we are introduced to members of his family, including his father Morris Goldsmith (in terrific shape for 92!) and cousin Joseph Zinker. Both talk about Goldsmith's childhood, how he started in music, how he studied with pianist Jakob Gimpel, etc.—accompanied by terrific photos and home movie footage of young Jerry horsing around. There are many pleasant surprises—when Goldsmith mentions how seeing *Spellbound* inspired him to go into film scoring, we hear Miklós Rózsa say a few words on the younger composer. Interview snippets here and elsewhere with son Joel and second-wife Carol also give some insight into Jerry the person.

Also excellent is the 10 minutes or so immediately thereafter, discussing some of the creative sounds Goldsmith has used over the years. Percussionist Emil Richards demonstrates the rub-rods from *Poltergeist* and the stainless steel bowls (!) and bass slide whistle used in *Planet of the Apes*—the mixing bowls can be heard as the fast-paced metallic sounds towards the end of "The Search." Goldsmith himself is seen adding synth overdubs to *Lionheart* (1987). Best of all is Craig Huxley performing the blaster beam used in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, a long block of wood with strings on top hit by a hollow aluminum cylinder and mallet—it made that awesome, deep, distorted electronic tearing used for V'Ger. (I want a blaster beam!) Orchestrators Arthur Morton and Alexander Courage also discuss how they work with Goldsmith.

From here the film unfortunately limps to its conclusion with more coverage of *The River Wild*. Recording music really is tedious and while the interviews with the director (Curtis Hanson), mixer (Bruce Botnick) and a few players are informative, it all tends to overlap, just like the different takes of the same few cues. It's not that great a movie or score, although one wonders what else, of Goldsmith's scores last year, might have been more appropriate—*The Shadow*? *Bad Girls*? The film loses track of what it wants to show us: if it's film music's power in general, then *The River Wild* is clear-cut but weak. If it's Goldsmith's art and creativity, you'd want to show the depth of his work, and you'd be better off looking at more art-minded films, such as *Chinatown* (or even *Alien* in retrospect). If it's Goldsmith's craft, maybe you've picked the right movie, but it becomes a glorification of the mundane. As the point is made in

the film, there's no one Goldsmith score you can point to as representative of what he does—especially not *The River Wild*, a hack-thriller for which Goldsmith hastily replaced a Maurice Jarre score, and for which the director explains he wants the cue to be "ominous, but quietly ominous" (i.e. my movie stinks, maybe you'll make this scene scary, but not as scary as when something jumps out at you later).

The best movie-composer documentary remains *Music for the Movies: Bernard Herrmann*, because it had the magic three things going for it: 1) Famous and excellent films like *Psycho*, *Vertigo* and *Citizen Kane*. 2) Powerful, distinguished music, which can be easily shown as unique unto itself and especially effective in the films. 3) A flamboyant, fascinating personality at the center of it all. For the Goldsmith movie, there are some well-recognized films on hand, but the point is (properly) made that Goldsmith is not just a one or two-genre composer. Actually, maybe that is not quite true: for years Goldsmith's best work came on "dark" subject matter, and you could say that Goldsmith did for science fiction, action and fantasy films what Herrmann did for psychological thrillers—but *Legend* and *Rambo* are not *Vertigo* and *Psycho*. Goldsmith for decades broke new ground, but in films that would not be appropriate for a general-audience documentary. Recently, he's gotten away from people getting their heads blown off and instead concentrated, well, on things like *The River Wild*, the results of which are still classy, but far less interesting. In keeping with Goldsmith's '90s image, Karlin presents Goldsmith as a master of both dark and light (each of which exists in watered-down form in *The River Wild*); however, accolades to this effect get tiring, both for the layman, because there's no frame of reference as to what he's better than, and for the collector, because we know this already. Then again, the fans for whom much of the information is already familiar are probably those who thrive on its repetition—it's a love-fest, and they'll love it.

As for the third qualification, Goldsmith the person is anything but flamboyant. He is known for being unable or unwilling to discuss his work at any level beyond the most superficial, and even that seems a strain. He usually lapses into an explanation that everything he does is purely emotional and instinctual, and that he can't discuss it, so why bother? In the film, he compares himself to a Method actor, which is probably accurate. It's really amazing, and probably frustrating for him as well as us—he can do it, he just can't articulate what it is he does. A total workaholic, he seems more a creature of emotion than anything else—relationships with directors are very important, as is his "bond" with every film's internal "meaning" (hence his distaste for *Alien*, *Total Recall*, etc.). A couple of times in discussing a film (such as *Islands in the Stream*) he almost seems to get misty-eyed, although this could be just a result of 40 years of cigarettes. However, for an emotional guy, he seems to carry himself in a very detached and professional way. So, he's cool, but passionate; a genius, but unable to explain why; close-mouthed, but occasionally conversational and even funny; down-to-earth, but Beverly Hills-remote. To Karlin's credit, *Film Music Masters* presents the largest single package to date of Jerry-clips whereby, through either suggestion, rehearsal, repetition or spontaneous articulation, even he comes off with more insightful things to say than in any other place before, and we can start to get a sense of his personality. He still seems most comfortable discussing procedural matters, and hence the film pursues this factual, process-oriented scope rather than any kind of intellectual, historical or



theoretical one, sometimes lapsing into tedium. Also, unlike the case with the Herrmann documentary, Goldsmith is very much present and working in conjunction with the filmmakers; if there are some interesting angels or demons which have plagued his life, nobody is going to discuss them here (which is understandable). Just in the way of anecdotes, the Herrmann film had buckets of juicy stories and life-history information, and the Goldsmith picture offers little in comparison. But to be fair, that's not the picture Karlin set out to make. However, he did set out to show us why Jerry Goldsmith is so great, and while the comments by industry professionals fill in various pieces of the puzzle (there is footage of Goldsmith, Joe Dante and Henry Mancini at the 1993 SPFM Tribute to Jerry Goldsmith dinner), still others seem untouched. For example, Goldsmith mentions how he tends to write a main theme and then smaller motif per picture, and the segment on unusual instruments shows off his creativity, but discussion of Goldsmith's music itself would have been helpful. We see a

scene from *The River Wild* without music, then with it—what are the steps by which Goldsmith fills in the blanks? How has he fitted music composition to films? How has he mastered different styles? A composer such as Chris Young would have been excellent in explaining how you put the notes together to do these things and how Goldsmith has blazed trails in so many areas—something similar to Royal Brown's piano presentation of basic Herrmann licks in that film.

However, if the actual video seems to cut off without saying much, Karlin has done a brilliant thing: he has included a 96-page booklet which is like a transcript of what would have been a 10-hour version of the film. This makes the booklet alone an invaluable source of photos, anecdotes and information. If you have ever been interested in the process of scoring a film, and/or what all those different people listed on soundtrack albums do, this booklet will answer all your questions. If someone mentions Ken Hall doing X in the editing process, for example, the very next quote is Ken Hall himself discussing X—along

with appropriate photos. Most of the comments are from Karlin's own videotaped interviews, but he has also added quotations from other sources (books, conferences, television clips, magazines) to give a more rounded presentation. In a way, the book is the ideal format for what he tried to do in the film—it's a barrage of data from primary sources, in no particular order, but written down so one can access it at one's own pace. Still more interview material from Goldsmith's family and an article by Jon Burlingame on his television work are icing on the cake. The rest of the package features two 8" by 10" glossy b&w photos—one of Jerry today, one of Jerry in the '50s—and a copy of the orchestra/cue chart used on *The River Wild*, as prepared by Jo Ann Kane Music Service. The whole thing comes in a sturdy, attractive slipcase.

No doubt some people expect that for their \$100 they ought to see Goldsmith go to the bathroom, but when you put together the book, video, photos and slipcase—plus the fact it's a limited edition—it's a reasonable price. So, hop to it. •

# DANNY ELFMAN

From Pee-Wee to Batman to Two Films a Year

Article by Lukas Kendall; Part 1 of 2

Today is a special day for Danny Elfman—which has nothing to do with any film or film score. It's the day a week he spends with his two daughters, who pretty much bounce off the walls as their daddy arms himself with coffee and smokes for yet another film music interview. "You're here to talk about film music?" he says. "Well, film music sucks, that's pretty much my opinion." He is marginally amused to see a copy of FSM from some months back where every letter fell under a heading of something "sucking," complete with a cartoon of Jerry Goldsmith reading FSM and thinking, "This magazine sucks."

The Elfman "compound" is one of those Southern Californian homes built high into a cliff, with a spacious, vertical "yard" rather than a ranch-like horizontal one; it features all kinds of plant life even surrounding a little stream. The house is marvelously decorated with *Nightmare Before Christmas*-like skeleton-chairs and knick-knacks, including a shrunken head mounted in a glass case. It's part normal home, part *Addams Family* and part *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*—gymnast rings, for example, hang outside his studio, a separate, smaller building, presumably so he can get up and stretch on them at any stressed-out time. Elfman is even dressed like he could be a character in *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, with an "alternative" striped T-shirt, a face much younger than his 42 years, a fabulous frock of bright red hair—most fans probably don't realize what red hair he has, since film music magazines are cheap and printed in black-and-white—and even some newly applied tattoos.

To begin to understand why Danny Elfman thinks film music sucks, one must understand his own peculiar entry into the field, meteoric rise to the top of it, and disenchanted withdrawal into a self-imposed two-film-per-year schedule. Danny Elfman has no formal musical training; as he puts it, he didn't go to music school, he went to *film music school*—the local movie theater in Baldwin Hills, California (a suburb of Los Angeles) where he and his friends would go every week to take in the latest cinematic offerings. "I don't know when I first saw *The Day the Earth Stood Still*—it couldn't have been when it first came out, because I hadn't been born yet—but that had a major impact on me," he says. "I loved Ray Harryhausen's animation with Bernard Herrmann's scores, to the point where if it was Harryhausen without Herrmann, it just seemed incomplete. Obviously I loved fantasy and horror, the darker the better; in fact, when comedies or musicals came to the theaters, myself and my friends would boycott." It was through this process of being a movie fan that Elfman came to notice the different styles composers had, the absence of which he laments in today's movies. "By the time I was a teenager, I prided myself in recognizing the music of my favorite composers. After a while, I'd go, oh, this is Steiner, and oh, this is Herrmann, or Tiomkin, or Waxman, there was something unmistakable about them."

Elfman was a rock 'n' roller with the popular band Oingo Boingo (they provided the song "Weird Science" to the movie of that same name) in the late '70s and early '80s—it ended October 31 of this year in a farewell con-

cert—and was hired to score Tim Burton's first feature-length film, *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*, in 1985. His quirky, off-beat but dramatically astute style was a perfect match for Burton's bizarre visuals; to this day, his earliest comedy music is a model for scoring the countless, much lesser films churned out by Hollywood, as film editors routinely turn to the *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure/Back to School* CD for temp-tracks. Step by step, with the help of Burton's popular films and the representation of Richard Kraft—then a record producer at Varese Sarabande, later an agent at ICM and now head of his own Kraft-Benjamin Agency—Elfman continued to rise.

Then in 1989, he scored *Batman*, and was suddenly huge. The *Batman* score was orchestral and appropriately gothic, but with a unique, Elfmanesque flair. Love it or hate it, there was and is a frenetic, idiosyncratic quality to his writing which is fun to listen to and dramatically effective, and therefore alternately loathed and imitated by classically trained composers who probably loathe it all the more since they have to copy it all the time. If there were big projects before *Batman*—*Beetlejuice*, *Scrooged*, *Midnight Run*—even bigger ones came in the three years after it: *Darkman*, *Dick Tracy*, *Edward Scissorhands*, and *Nightbreed*. He even revitalized (briefly) the television theme with *The Simpsons* and *Tales from the Crypt*. He called it quits on the action genre after *Batman Returns* in 1992, tried his hand at lush orchestral romance in *Sommersby* in 1993, and then poured his efforts into *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, released in late 1993. He provided songs, lyrics, score, and several singing voices, including the lead voice—a mammoth contribution which resulted in him being as much the *auteur* of the film as Tim Burton, since both were involved from the very beginning, before there was even a director or script.

*Nightmare* was not a bomb, but it wasn't a blockbuster; Burton and Elfman's dark Halloween/Christmas imagery made for an interesting and original film, but not a family classic or a rebirth of the musical. Burton and Elfman ultimately had a falling out over the picture, which to this day neither is willing to discuss, and Elfman was absent from Burton's 1994 *Ed Wood*. *Nightmare* and its aftermath was important to Elfman in that it determined a new direction for him, which was not the route of the eight-picture-a-year film composer. He did a new rock album, *Boingo*, and commenced work on scripts, with an eye to direct. All these things—film composing, writing, performing, hopefully directing—would interlock in a new, unique creative career which would continue to pay the rent, but allow for different modes of expression at different times. The new career-plan has paid off right away in his film music; 1994's *Black Beauty*, last spring's *Dolores Claiborne* and this fall's *Dead Presidents* and *To Die For* are a quantum leap above his earlier efforts in terms of orchestration and complexity, while still being functional and effective as film scores.

Which pretty much brings us up to date. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to guess the reasons why Elfman thinks film music sucks, since they

DANNY ELFMAN





are the same ones about which *Film Score Monthly* readers complain: Movies are a business; temporary music scores have reduced composers merely to copying the expected styles; composers have to plagiarize in order to continue to work; sound effects are too loud; directors are too dumb; there's not enough time to write; there are few if any original voices or ideas. That last criticism is refreshing in a time when film scores have become so identical, the conventions so entrenched, and the composers so expected to write the same score over and over again, that the only way to judge film music is in degrees of accuracy to the original "source." For example, score Z is a pretty obvious knock-off of scores X and Y, but the composer had no choice, and it's pretty competently done, so we like it.

Elfman's criteria, on the other hand, is more in degrees of originality. For him, if score Z is a knock-off of scores X and Y, no matter how close or not-close it is, it's still a knock-off, so who cares? Lost forever are the infinite number of different and potentially much better ways of approaching movie X. Elfman does not get work based on his ability to write knock-offs of different composers—he's the first to admit he's not trained in the way John Williams is, and thus there's no point in him trying to be John Williams. Plus, he has written so many of the "score X's" of the world in the first place—things like *Pee-Wee*, *Beetlejuice*, *Batman* and *Edward Scissorhands* which end up in every temp score, and anybody who disagrees should watch *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* and *Casper*—that it's infuriating for him to see other composers rip him off, deny it, and all the while deny that he even "wrote" those scores in the first place.

### Sounding Off

"I do understand the fact that it's just a money-making thing," says Elfman, taking a drag from his cigarette, "but that doesn't matter, you should still give it your own voice. Composers are always prone to imitating themselves, which is part of that subjective thing called one's style or voice. It tends to reappear. Composers tend to have inspiration from various classical scores and early film scores, as has been the way with classical scores for hundreds of years. However, to my knowledge, I never remember Max Steiner plagiarizing Franz Waxman plagiarizing Bernard Herrmann plagiarizing Nino Rota. They all had distinct voices that were their own, wherever their inspirations came from. Today, a number of very talented composers seem to be plagiarizing so freely that it can be impossible to find where their voice is in a particular work. Cue by cue, one can hear John Williams become Thomas Newman become Danny Elfman become Jerry Goldsmith, as if following a temp track which in fact is all too often the case. Film music today is all about ripping things off. It's one thing to do it well or have it well executed, but if you're just copying something that's already been done, that's all you're doing. If one is just providing any style that is asked for, then one is, for lack of a better word, a hack.

"It would be one thing if that's what they consider themselves, and they're honest about it, but *usually* that's not the case," he chuckles a little. "So many composers will do scores that are just copying everything from beginning to end, changing a few notes or twists on a melody here or there. Stealing in film music permeates the entire business. If somebody does do something original and it works, it's then ripped off immediately by everybody else; it's like a magnet, boom, everything for the next five years is going to rip it off. There are too many composers today who successfully bang out music by the yard like so much wallpaper, without any sense of artistry." (Contemporary composers Elfman admires, for those wondering if there were any, include Jerry Goldsmith, of course, as well as Graeme Revell, Rachel Portman, Tom Newman, John Williams, Elmer Bernstein, and "four or five others.")

Elfman cites John Williams's classic shark theme from *Jaws* as an example, which, if ripped-off today, would be justified probably like this: "They'd say, 'Well, it's just two notes, it's just a *thing*, anybody could have done that, so I'm just kind of doing the same thing, I'm not really doing John Williams.' Well, the fact is, *he did it first*. It doesn't matter how simple it is or where it came from, he brought it to a genre. It doesn't matter to me whether I can identify John Williams's classical homage for several of the *Star Wars* themes. The fact is, he brought it to the science fiction genre and made it fresh. On *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*, of course I was inspired by Nino Rota, Nino Rota's influence is all over it, but I was the first to take it and apply it to a contemporary American comedy. And then after *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* came out, I heard Nino Rota-inspired music in every contemporary comedy for the next five years! And still, well, 'Elfman didn't do that, that's inspired by Nino Rota,' but that's not the point. The point is they didn't think of doing it for an American comedy. The fact that Nino Rota and Bernard Herrmann are my inspirations and show themselves in scores like *Batman* and *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* I'll freely admit." Elfman cites *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Jason and the Argonauts* and "just about everything" by Herrmann as among his favorites; Rota's work for *Fellini's Casanova* is his single most favorite score, the music getting into the film to a point where it's "almost a musical with everyone about to burst into song and sing along with the score."

"I'm really concerned about the direction the whole thing is going in right

now," he says. "I won't take on too many films, let them overlap, do two at the same time, have to turn to arrangers and just churn it out by the yard, or start a music composing franchise with 'protégés' like several unnamed big shots are doing right now. With salaries hovering near the half-million mark and with the ability to spend several weeks writing a theme or two and having a team of arrangers do the work, it's easy to see where the temptation leads." Elfman has limited himself to two films a year, in between other writing and rock and roll projects, an unbelievable artistic commitment which, if thought about in other terms, is something akin to "losing" millions of dollars a year in projects he's turned down. He has refused to sell out in an era when there is every reason to do so.

"Every year, because I'm such a cynical bastard to begin with," he reflects, "I wonder if I'm not making a decision I'll regret for the rest of my life. 20 years from now, when I'm dead broke, I'll probably regret many of the decisions I'm making now. I might look back and think that I could have done such-and-such a number of pictures from 1990 to 2000. But the movies are around forever. I've done a couple of cheesy comedies when I first started out; I was struggling to do anything, just to get back in front of an orchestra. I wasn't able to pick and choose, but now I am, and I don't want to have more of those types of pictures following me around." He here refers to the *Hot to Trot* and *Summer School* type flicks in the mid to late '80s he might have been better off not doing. However, even on 1986's *Back to School*, starring Rodney Dangerfield, he takes pride and some shock in the fact that although the film wasn't much, the style of his music has continued in similar films—"just something about that vibe."

"Besides, I get more cantankerous every year," he adds, "something I've been working on quite actively, as I've been trying to model myself in Bernard Herrmann's quirky image. I mean, composers are all assholes, myself included. We'll never have a guild or a union because you'll never get us all in the same room at the same time. For some reason we all seem to behave like male cats in an alley in heat with one female. It's not a matter of composers being pleasant or approachable, it's a matter of them being assholes, at least to other composers. Maybe it has to do with nobody ever giving me credit for doing anything."

Still, when asked why he should care about this, why he and other film composers shouldn't just take the money and run, Elfman's response is immediate and absolute: "We're supposed to be *artists*."

**Next Issue:** Sound effects suck; also, how Elfman *actually* writes his own music—with his original sketches to prove it!

Everyone who takes their soundtrack collecting seriously, please raise your hands.

## The SOUNDTRACK COLLECTOR

Volume 1 Issue 3

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# LORAN ALAN DAVIS



Loran Alan Davis, a native of Baltimore, MD; currently resides in York, PA with his wife Lorie. Loran graduated from high school in 1976 and went on to study music at the Peabody Conservatory. His musical studies there included; composition, conducting, organ, choral studies, theory, and orchestration. Professionally, Loran has served as music director, organist, and choir director at numerous churches.

His musical influences include Gustav Mahler, Jerry Goldsmith, Miklos Rozsa, Bernard Herrmann, and Alexander Scriabin.

Loran's *Symphony # 1* marks the first published recording of the symphony, which is being revised and expanded for concert hall performance. For the future, Loran wishes to continue with compositional techniques that merge electronic and symphonic textures. In addition, Loran plans to compose for film and television.

## SYMPHONY NO. 1: THE JOURNEY OF HOPE

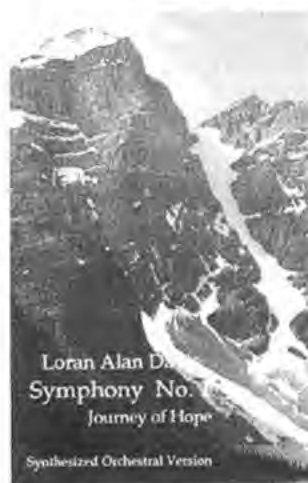
This recording of the *Symphony # 1*, (sub-titled - *Journey of Hope*) is a synthesized version of the orchestral manuscript. The symphony's inspiration came from Russell Boyd, Loran's late father-in-law, who was fighting a battle with cancer. Loran saw in Russell's battle with cancer the tragedies and triumphs we all face in our "Journey" through life. It is to Russell Boyd that this musical expression is dedicated.

**Conflict** — This movement represents our daily problems and struggles. The musical "Hope Theme" from the fourth movement attempts to make a few appearances, but it's attempts at a complete statement are futile.

**Peace** — In life, we do find occasional peace. Unfortunately, in life - as in this movement - peace always seems uncertain and short-lived.

**Turmoil** — Sometimes in life, everything closes in around us. That "turmoil" is represented in this movement. The "Hope Theme" is here, but it is tormented, twisted, and torn apart.

**Hope** — Our Journey is complete. We have passed all the obstacles. The "Hope Theme" is presented in all its glory and the symphony comes to a passionate, but gentle close.



"Absolutely wonderful! Passionate and Exciting. I'd love, some day, to hear the Journey performed by full orchestra. Loran, call me, I'll be there." —Ron

Instrumentation: Performed on Roland D-50. Original Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, harp, chimes, glockenspiel, xylophone, bass drum, snare drum, tam-tam, crash cymbal, suspended cymbal, 30 violins, 12 violas, 10 cellos, 8 basses, organ, full choir.

Type: Instr/New Age Symphonic  
Opinion: Excellent+ Snd: B Pkg: A  
Symphony No. 1 Davis ©1991  
DAVISLA100C tape \$10.95

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# PHILOSOPHY OF SOUNDTRACK PRODUCTION, WITH ROBERT TOWNSON

## Inside Varèse Sarabande

Interview by CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Let it be known that Robert Townson is a die hard film music fan. That he is a hard worker is obvious from one look at any of our CD shelves, but the executive producer of Varèse Sarabande's soundtrack releases and re-recordings has a driving enthusiasm for the field that helps him to slog through all of the production *tsuris*. Townson is both a fan of and good friends with many practitioners of this art, he often uses the words "very cool" to describe the music ("To Die For" is a very cool score, by the way), and he is continually working to release as much good film music as Varèse can afford.

On the 12th of July I spent an hour and a half with Townson at the Varèse offices, centrally located on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, CA. We spoke during a lull in that day's game of phone-tag between Townson and Jerry Goldsmith, as they worked to schedule more sessions with the National Philharmonic in the fall. Townson's enthusiasm was bubbling—in fact, contrary to my expectations, I was the more reserved one—as he showed me the art for upcoming CDs, let me listen to some of the re-recording of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, allowed me to look at a copy of the CD *Jerry Goldsmith: Suites and Themes*, and generally acted personable.

He closed out our talk (an hour of which I got on tape) by saying "I gotta go, I have a hundred soundtracks to produce."

**Christopher Walsh:** Your re-recordings have really picked up in the last few years, but when I listed the ones that have been done so far, other than the Alex North series, I couldn't sense if there was a direction in which you were taking them. Is your work with the Seattle Symphony going to result in more recordings?

**Robert Townson:** Certainly. Not necessarily with Seattle, but they are one of the orchestras I've worked with, and there are just a lot of albums which I've backlogged over the years. Between Cliff Eidelman and Joel McNeely and obviously Jerry Goldsmith, I have a conducting team I feel good about. I like how they work with the orchestra, how they interpret the music they're given. I mean, Jerry Goldsmith is brilliant with Alex North, and with anything he touches, and I think that's resulting in a pretty historic series of recordings. And the younger guys, Joel and Cliff, are just remarkable. I feel comfortable with giving a Bernard Hermann score to them; they'll come up with an interpretation that I'll feel good about.

**CW:** How did you start to deal with Eidelman and McNeely as potential conductors?

**RT:** I worked with them initially as composers, by producing albums of their original scores. With Cliff, the first was *Triumph of the Spirit*; with Joel, it was through *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*. I worked with them on those albums, got to know them better, got to know of their aspirations and talents, and so I wanted to give them the chance to step in front of a symphony orchestra and do something other than a score for a new movie.

**CW:** In a report we had in *FSM* about a Goldsmith concert, Goldsmith said that the re-recording of *A Streetcar Named Desire* came about because of a free weekend. Exactly how quickly did that session come together?

**RT:** It came together very quickly. It wasn't just a case of Jerry suddenly having a free weekend and us saying, "Well, let's do something." We had been planning on doing *Streetcar* for a long time, and our first run at the album came the previous summer, but between *The River Wild* coming out of nowhere and the fact that his schedule is always in a state of evolution, we ended up not being able to do it. And then all of a sudden, in mid-January, again his schedule was changing, and something happened on a film that he was supposed to be scoring [he bailed from *Babe*, the talking pig movie -LK], and he came up with some time. [At first] it was almost a joke more than anything else, in that essentially we were talking about recording something the following week, on an album for which I had not prepared any music, hadn't booked an orchestra, hadn't booked a recording studio, so we just let it go at that, but he jokingly said during the conversation, when we were talking about trying to book this at some point, "Well, I'm free next week now." Anyway, the next day he was off, he had to go out of town, and that was the end of that. But later that night, and the next morning, I'm thinking, "Oh, that would be so cool to somehow put together the *Streetcar* music." So, just out of wanting to see what could happen, I made some calls to try to locate what we would need.

As it turned out, there were no conductor scores available. A lot of the parts did exist, but only as reduced piano scores. But anyway, through the Warner Bros. music library and through Anna North, we gathered together most of the parts of most of the cues of the score; there were a few things decaying that we would need to re-copy, but essentially it was in pretty good shape. I then got in touch with Sidney Sax, and he kind of magically, over the next couple of days, came up with a studio and an orchestra. So I called Jerry, who was in Budapest at the time, and told him that we were ready to record the following weekend, if he was available—and he was up for it!

We sent him the scores for him to study while on the plane to London; we recorded only days later. Everybody mobilized for something we all feel very strongly about, Alex North's music, and it was a magical recording—with two weeks of planning. Compared to *2001*, which was like three years! It turned out perfectly, a wonderful recording, and we had a great time.

**CW:** Also, Alex North had done some pre-production work on a disc for Spartacus. What can you tell us about those plans?

**RT:** My intent with Jerry is that we're going to record a lot of Alex. I mean, we're just getting warmed up here. He was the most magnificent composer, who wrote so much phenomenal music, and he was a friend of mine and of Jerry's. *Spartacus* was originally going to be the first album that we'd do, then of course that turned out to be *2001*, and then *Streetcar* came together, so I figure if *Spartacus* is not the next, it'll be done within the next couple of recordings. It's my favorite score, and to do a new recording of 70 minutes of it, with Jerry conducting, would be magnificent.

North picked his favorite parts of the score before he died; he essentially put together the album for us. He presented his 70 minutes, saying "this is how I want *Spartacus* to exist." He was very aware of the recordings we were about to do, which would include at least *Spartacus* and



*Cleopatra*, and we were already well underway with *2001* when he passed away, so he knew that all that was going to be, though he didn't live to see it.

**CW:** I was wondering if you could describe the process of turning a score into a score CD, a process fans hear about piecemeal; we do hear about specific problems, like the re-use difficulties that Dolores Claiborne had, resulting in 30 minutes of a 100-minute score being released, and we hear about the production of big projects, such as Fox's Star Wars box set. But Varèse does so many of these albums a year; how would you characterize the process?

**RT:** To this day, when I finally hold a score CD in my hand, I see it as nothing less than a miracle—and that's after 350, almost 400 albums I've done at this point. The number of obstacles you must overcome to produce a soundtrack for a new film, or to put a re-recording together, can make it just an incomprehensible undertaking. When people run down to their CD store and buy something, they have no idea what is actually going into it. When you have reshoots on the movie going on, and the composer doesn't know what scenes are being changed while he's writing the music (which he's supposed to be recording the following week), and the movie is coming out in two weeks, and we want the album to be out before then to maximize its sales (since the album always has to pay for itself)—you end up with schedules that are just inhuman, and that are totally unrealistic for anyone to work under. It's ridiculous for a composer to be put in that situation, but as ridiculous as it is, it's not uncommon at all. It just happened with Basil Poledouris on *Under Siege 2*, it happened with James Newton Howard on *Waterworld*, and *The Net*, which Mark Isham scored—it's opening in a couple of weeks, and he just finished the recording last week [the first week of July] so we're just starting to work on the album today.

So for all of these things to come into place for the original scoring session, while the composer is simultaneously trying to mix the score for the movie and for the album, while we're working to sequence the album and put together a product and get the artwork from the studio...

We also have to get approval from the stars of the film—we're doing a film like *The Net*, and all of a sudden Sandra Bullock of all people has approval of every image of her that's distributed





**Left:** Varèse's conference room, decorated like the rest of the their offices with Matthew Peak cover paintings, here of the four *Young Indiana Jones* CDs. **Right:** Robert Townson and Jerry Goldsmith at the recording session for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, re-enacting the high-chair/low-chair scene from Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*. Townson photos by Matthew Peak; office photo by Chris Walsh

by the studio for the promotion of the film—so that takes time, to track down these people in order to get them to sign off on the use of their likeness on everything. With all of this going on just in order to create a releasable item, it's why there are often no liner notes; in reality, there was like a day and a half to put a product together.

We do what we can, and if we have a director who's in town and working with the composer and is ready to do something extra, that's one thing; it was nice to have Steven Soderbergh write something for *The Underneath*. But sometimes the director will already be off on location, so he's unable to write anything, and the movie's still being edited so you can't see it and write anything about it, and the score's being recorded while you're working on the package so not even the music is done so that you can write about it. Just the whole last-minute nature, the complete flying-by-the-seat-of-your-pants process of production, stands in the way of albums existing in a way I'd like them to exist. You do what you can, but that's as far as it can go sometimes. But in spite of all that, I'm very happy more often than not with how things turn out. I'd rather have a nice, representative 30 minutes of a score that's well-produced and reasonably well-packaged, than to have something not exist at all. That's the option. We just can't take an extra month or two to do a 2001-type package, with tons of photos and liner notes; we can't have a longer album if it ends up not paying for itself, which would then ultimately reduce the number of albums that can come out. We have to be part of the real world, and live with budgets, and try to preserve as much good music as possible.

The 30-minute albums are difficult for the composers, too; we don't inflict 30-minute soundtracks on everyone just because we like 30-minute albums, there's just no option. It's a difficult situation all around when someone has written a score that he or she is really proud of—"I think this is the best score I ever wrote!"—but if it's 60 or 90 minutes long, and we have to pare that down to 30 minutes, it's painful. But it has to be, because the dollars are too significant.

[And with reissues of older material,] the state of certain things can be pretty mind-boggling. For a long time we were going to do an album of Alex North's *The Penitent*, a score that was recorded in the late '80s—and the tapes were lost! So you have Alex North's second-to-last score, from 1987, but apart from a couple of cues that exist, the majority of master tapes are

just gone. How sad that is; it's such a wonderful score, but once the tapes are gone, they're gone, it's lost music.

If people knew the number of albums that almost happened, but didn't happen—it dwarfs the number of albums that exist, because all of a sudden, for one reason or another, you run into a road block that you can't get past. As disappointing and depressing as that is, sometimes you just have to pull the plug.

**CW:** Kendall reminded us that that very nearly happened on the *Star Wars* box set; the only Empire tapes they could find were disintegrating, and that score's only 15 years old.

**RT:** It's unbelievable how regular that stuff is.

**CW:** How many CDs does Varèse do every year now?

**RT:** We're probably still averaging 50 to 60 soundtracks a year, which is pretty outrageous.

**CW:** I noticed that Varèse's tendency to give composers prominent credit has extended to putting the composer's name over the title of the film on those labels on the new CD seals, the ones that are longer and easier to open. I thought that was a good call.

**RT:** Yeah, I like those as well. It's no secret that composers are at the heart of what we do here, which explains the prominent cover credits that everyone receives. We do larger composer credits than most other labels do. We want to treat the composers with the respect they deserve; we want to treat the recording sessions as events, which is what they really are. You have Jerry Goldsmith recording his new score, and that is an event. That is worthy of having Matthew Peak do artistic photo coverage, he's not just somebody shooting snapshots. It's an opportunity to preserve what is a historic moment, when you have this wonderful music being heard for the first time. Imagine if we had photos, the kind of coverage we had in the *Rudy* and *Angie* booklets, for the early Korgold sessions, or for Alfred Newman's, how wonderful and historic that would be. It's a shame that it didn't happen more often, then or now.

**CW:** Explain Varèse Vintage, for people who might not know what it is.

**RT:** Varèse Vintage is not something I work on, but it is a division that specializes in older pop albums. There's also the Varèse Spotlight series of Broadway recordings. They're small subsidiaries; we're all under the same roof.

**CW:** What are your definite CD releases for the rest of this year?

**RT:** There's *Under Siege 2* with Basil, *The Net* with Mark Isham, *To Die For* by Danny Elfman, the Tangerine Dream score to *Legend*... We're doing a Universal movie called *Babe*, Cliff Eidelman's rejected score to *The Picture Bride*, which is a wonderful, beautiful score, a picture called *Magic in the Water*, with music by David Schwartz, a *Hercules* album with Joe LoDuca, *Sudden Death* by John Debney, a collection called *Voyages: The Film Music Journeys of Alan Silvestri*, that will have *Romancing the Stone* for the first time, plus a collection of themes from all of the other albums we've done with him; and then, of course, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which is a very time-consuming project. And we're getting ready for some more recordings this fall.

**CW:** Is most of the mixing and mastering for your albums done at a certain dedicated studio? How much of it is farmed out to other studios?

**RT:** Most of my albums, 70% to 80% I'd say, are mastered at Ocean View Digital. My engineer is Joe Gastwirt; he's wonderful at what he does, and given a choice, schedule-wise, he's the engineer I'd want to work with. As far as the recording goes, there's a handful of studios around here: the Todd-AO scoring stage, which is conveniently right across the street, and that probably supplies half of the scores. And then there's the Sony scoring stage in Culver City. There used to be a lot of recordings done at Fox, but not anymore; they shut down their stage, which is unfortunate, it's a wonderful room. In London, Whitfield Studios is wonderful, that's where we did *Streetcar*; we did *2001* at Abbey Road, which is magnificent; and Joel McNeely just recorded his new score at Air Lyndhurst Studios, and he was really happy with the acoustics there.

**CW:** One soundtrack I was curious about was *The Cowboys*. Specifically, some people were wondering about the use of a Bob Peak painting ["Before Winter"].

**RT:** Bob Peak did not do that painting for *The Cowboys*, but I thought it was so perfect and appropriate for that album. I guess it's no secret that Bob Peak is my favorite artist [gestures to the Bob Peak original hanging in his office], and he had a lot of gallery paintings that he had done over the years, ["Before Winter"] being one of them. The *Obsession* CD cover also was a Bob Peak gallery painting that had nothing to do with



the film, but I don't know if you could find something that evoked what Herrmann was doing musically the way that painting does. *The Cowboys* was an opportunity to expose a painting that people hadn't seen before, which is very exciting for me. Hopefully such efforts are appreciated. I just love the way the package for that record came together.

**CW:** What else can you say about your relationship with Bob and Matthew Peak?

**RT:** I got involved with Matthew through his father. Originally I didn't even know that Bob Peak had a son who was a working artist. I had had Bob do a painting of Jerry Goldsmith for the *Suites and Themes* disc that I did at Masters Film Music up in Canada. At the time Varèse was wanting to have an original painting done for the *Screen Themes* disc [the John Scott performance of music from 1988's films], but couldn't afford to have Bob Peak, this internationally renowned artist, do the cover. This was around the time Matthew had done the painting for *A Nightmare on Elm Street IV*, so when I saw the ad for that movie in the paper, I saw that while there were a lot of rip-off artists working in a Bob Peak style, this painting has something different going for it. It was definitely Peak-inspired, but it was a lot deeper than that. So when I looked into this artist—remember, his paintings then were only signed "Matthew"—and found out that his name was Matthew Peak, all of a sudden the puzzle pieces fell into place, and it was "Oh my God, that's Bob Peak's son!"

So Matthew was hired to do the cover for *Screen Themes*, and the Miklós Rózsa *Hollywood Legends* disc. By now, we've done over 20 projects together. I think that, artistically, he's developing at a phenomenal rate; he's also a brilliant photographer, and that was just a sideline for him. He was never a photographer per se, he's an artist, but he started coming to recording sessions like *Rudy*, *Angie* and *2001*, and taking shots. It adds another dimension to things, to have great music and a great album, it complements it so much to have a great cover, one that's done just for that music, a piece of art inspired by the music on that album. It really helps to make it a complete package. Like on the *2001* album, we have music by [dramatic pause] Alex North, conducted by [another dramatic pause] Jerry Goldsmith, art by [still another dramatic pause] Matthew Peak—what a team.

One of the great stories I love telling is about the film *Rich in Love*, which was Georges Delerue's final score. When it was time for me to produce the album, Georges had already passed away. He was a good friend of mine, and he's always been one of my favorite composers, so I wanted this final soundtrack album of his to be treated with great respect and dignity, and be very classy. But MGM had done this ad campaign that was just horrific—a bad graphic of a heart with a Band-Aid on it. It was really depressing when that came in. After the artwork arrived, I got a call from [Rich in Love's producer] Lili Fini Zanuck asking what I thought of what they had sent over. I told her that I wasn't excited at all, and was really disappointed, and didn't like at all the idea of having that on the cover of Georges Delerue's last album. Lili and I had worked together on *Driving Miss Daisy* and we knew each other by this point, so she wanted me to be happy with it. She said that she didn't know what we could do here, but I suggested that we have Matthew do a couple of sketches, and have him do something special just for the album. She agreed to that.

Over that weekend, Matthew did four color comp sketches that he worked on while listening to the score, so they were pieces of art directly

inspired by Georges's music. He shot transparencies, and we sent them off to Lili and Richard Zanuck, who were then at the Tokyo Film Festival. I got a call at home one night from Lili, and she said that all four of Matthew's sketches were better than all 150 of the campaigns that MGM had put together for the film, and that she had already called the studio and asked them to postpone the movie's release, because she wanted Matthew to redo the whole campaign for the film! He was hired by the studio to do a finished painting of their favorite of the four sketches he did. This was really the first case where the film's ad campaign grew out of the score. His art is on the poster, on the laserdisc, and on the CD, and so because of wanting a good package of Georges Delerue's final score, the entire ad campaign of the movie was affected. It was one of the things that ended up bringing down the whole MGM art department! They were fired a couple of weeks later.

**CW:** Tell us about Matthew Peak's publishing company.

**RT:** Sanguin Fine Art has been formed to print and produce notecards of Matthew's and his father's artwork. The Masters Film Music Fine Art Gallery, along with Sanguin, is going to do a whole line of posters as well, and I think there's going to be some really exciting stuff. When, ultimately, the gallery is opened, there will be hand-signed photos, original prints, session shots, cover art like for *Blood & Thunder*, *2001*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Days of Wine and Roses* [the Michael Lang-Henry Mancini album], plus his gallery paintings, plus his father's work, which is an extraordinary number of great paintings that, for the most part, people have never seen. That's the fun stuff, exposing Matthew to a wider audience, and doing the first albums for composers like Eidelman and McNeely—to take people whom you feel strongly about and do what you can to make people notice; hopefully they'll feel the same way.

**CW:** Best of luck for all this.

**RT:** Thank you.

**CW:** In closing, is there anything in particular you wanted to get published? An opinion, a feeling?

**RT:** When I read some of the magazines that report on this stuff, it just seems that so many people come at this trying to be as negative as possible about everything, and that's depressing, considering how much hard work goes into them. Reviews are reviews, and not all of the work is good, but it's too bad that there seems to be such a negative tone over things; too many people have stopped trying just to enjoy what should be a great hobby and great music. But regardless of how it turns out, we're always trying, the composers are always trying. If the composer has two weeks to write a score, obviously he's not going to write *Spartacus*.

I don't know, I just think people should try to have a little more fun with this, because I'd say that for the most part we're having fun. I mean, it's a great thing to go into a studio with a hundred-piece orchestra, even for Jerry; I still see him when he starts a new movie, and he's excited by the challenges, he can't wait to solve the problems inherent in it, deal dramatically with what he has to deal with, and write the best score



he can. Every one is *The First One* again, because no film is the same. The first day in the recording session, when you're going to hear this music for the first time, the composer's there, the orchestra's there, the director's there, usually having an anxiety fit, nervous as hell, but then you get the downbeat, and if you have someone like Jerry at the podium, it's just glorious. Like at the *Rudy* session, when Rudy himself was there, he had been told by the director that "all this pain, all this anguish, will all be worth it when you see Jerry Goldsmith raise his arms in front of the

orchestra." And that was the perfect thing to say, because by the end of the playback of "The Final Game," Rudy was in tears, the director was in tears, the orchestra gave Jerry a standing ovation, and it was a great celebration of great music that Jerry had poured his soul into. And he's been doing that for decades. That, more than anything, sums up the state of film music. We have some great artists working, and it's an exciting time, more so than it was five or six years ago, when there were fewer albums coming out (though I think that it's gone too far the other way; probably there are too many albums coming out).

It's 1995, and Elmer Bernstein is working on the biggest films, along with Jerry Goldsmith and John Williams, plus we have this great group of talented composers who are really busy these days: Hans Zimmer, Basil McNeely and Eidelman, and Tom Newman of course writing brilliant stuff—and with this re-recording series that Jerry is doing, we know that every time we go to London, it's a historic thing. It's an exciting time for us and for film music.

**CW:** Thank you for your time.

**RT:** My pleasure.

#### Fun Facts About Varèse Sarabande!

Varèse Sarabande Records, Inc. was formed in the late 1970s when Chris Kuchler's Varèse Records (named after avant garde composer Edgar Varèse) merged with Tom Null's Sarabande Records (named after the French dance form).

The name is pronounced Vuh-rehz [rhymes with "pez" candy, accent on the second syllable] Sara-band [sounds like the name "Sara" and the word "band"].

The logo is just an ink blot which means nothing.

Varèse has released over 500 CDs and probably even more LPs. The "5200" series started in 1988 when Varèse entered into a distribution deal with MCA. No definitive listing of all their albums exists, not even at the company; reader Jeremy Moniz has compiled a pretty complete one which will hopefully be included in the upcoming FSM publication of Bob Smith's *U.S. Soundtracks on CD Price Guide*.

Varèse does have an in-house mail order department through which they sell their regular CDs as well as their limited edition "CD Club" ones. Write for a listing: 11846 Ventura Blvd Suite 130, Studio City CA 91604. Should you ever call them, the person who usually picks up is David Hamilton. He's a nice guy so don't be annoying.

Masters Film Music is the label which Robert Townson started while in his native Canada. When he joined Varèse, MFM releases were sold through the CD Club.

Even though the last CD Club releases were in 1992, they still don't have another batch in the works yet. Bob's too busy.

Agent Richard Kraft was head honcho at Varèse for several years in the 1980s.

Many if not all of Varèse's albums are released through Colosseum in Germany and SLC in Japan. Colosseum usually keeps the same artwork, but SLC often repackages the albums extensively with cool picture discs.

Varèse for years had their offices in a warehouse in the industrial wastelands of North Hollywood. They would go home in the evening and then the drag racers would come out.

Next time: Inside GNPI/Crescendo!



# KONG, KANE AND EVERYTHING ELSE

## The Top Ten Most Influential Film Scores

by JOHN S. WALSH

Each of the below scores marks the start of a major change in direction; works of similar style or greater expertise may have preceded them, but these are the ones that caused others to follow their lead and bring us the clichés and most popular styles. I listed them chronologically and attempted to show an evolution from the start of the sound era to the major trends we have today. A listing of twenty would have been more accurate, but ten should be enough to offend even the most casual film music listener.

As to those scores not here, what can I say? There's no Newman, Rózsa or Goldsmith, for reasons I'll explain in a follow-up article. I wished I could have found room for them, but certain scores have great reputations and were quite innovative, but were just not followed-up on.

I'm not saying any composers were directly inspired by these scores. Who can know? Almost all of these innovations were simply carried over from other musical genres; thus, *King Kong* may not have inspired other thematic scores, but Tchaikovsky might have. These are the scores that cut a path through the woods that others used. Whether it's direct inspiration or a producer not rejecting something because he liked something that preceded it, I have no idea.

Fortunately for me, neither do you.

### 1) *King Kong* by Max Steiner (1933)

What an RKO staff composer wrote in eight weeks was simply the Bible of film music. The early sound film composers knew that no other classical form connected with an audience with such immediacy as that of Romantic and operatic "program music" which also told stories, and a grand love story like *Kong* was the perfect vehicle for film music's first (only?) equivalent to the opera. And who better than Steiner, a child prodigy who studied with Mahler, to show how to use lots of music instead of just scene-setting bits, from a bombastic title theme to atmospheric on Skull Island to the musical illustration of Kong's (unseen) landing on the street. Cartoonish and too effusive, the ultimate example of Mickey Mousing that enables one to follow the story with closed eyes, Steiner's score directs the audience, proving music could be as up-front as in the silents and still work under dialogue, evoking action (the frantic jungle chases and pounding accentuation of Kong's punches predate Korngold), romance and humor. *Gone with the Wind* has more obvious themes (well, more obvious everything), but here the music gave us a handle on Kong's character, scaring us but also letting us know we could like him and laugh with him. That so much of this is what has condemned film music to the ghetto is beside the point because it was so correct in its prodding of the audience to react.

Much is made of Steiner's use of themes, but they are imperceptible to one expecting something to whistle. Instead one hears that there's so much going on here (though Steiner did not seem to pick up on the freaky Freudianisms under the surface, thank God), and Steiner isn't afraid to be out front and explicit. My favorite intrusive moment is when Denham's team encounters the chanting islanders. We first hear their song with sparse accompaniment that builds suspense where the chanting alone would be tedious. Finally, with a crash of cymbals, the whole damn orchestra kicks in to frolic with the natives. It's about as authentic as a night at the Copa, but it *sounds* right and it works. It's this very goosing of the audience that has been demanded from scores ever since.

I don't have a lot to say about this score because it's all been said. Influence? Take a look at your soundtrack collection.

### 2) *The Bride of Frankenstein* by Franz Waxman (1935) & *The Adventures of Robin Hood* by Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1938)

I'm cheating, big deal, it's my list. Though this is in danger of becoming a roll-call of all the old crusties everyone already knows about, that's because the few great scores stand out more as the years pass and we can better see who's been stealing from them. Of all the classics, *Bride* is without a doubt the most underrated. It has the most easily-grasped themes and the score is more a part of the film experience; the audience really hears the music, identifying the themes from scene to scene. This is a great example of what a score can do for a film because one can compare it to its nearly

scoreless predecessor, the 1931 *Frankenstein*, and see the depth of Waxman's achievement. As flamboyant as *Robin Hood* without taking away from the action, Waxman's most obvious contribution is the amount of humor he gives the film, very important because most of the comedy was adding during filming.



as Doyle uses the barking brass. All the themes and motifs are in the movie to work in this scene, and Waxman moves them along with the action like a silent composer, as if he's forgotten there's dialogue. When he brings the *Bride*'s theme to its full power during the lightning storm, then beats down the lab dweebs with the monster's undeveloped motif, it's thrilling, but it's also keeping our emotions in line, providing wonder, humor, and terror. He doesn't make a single misstep in the whole movie. The younger sister to *Kong*, *Bride*'s legacy is in every score that takes short motifs for characters and situations and keeps reminding us why the heck we're watching a movie about these people.

With *Robin Hood* we have the archetype of the Big Splashy Heroic Score, matching Steiner in terms of virtuosity but with a lush, more colorful sound. Korngold, a classical composer who emigrated to Hollywood, was the perfect bridge between musical worlds because he saw his classical and film work as having equal merit. Korngold's first swashbuckler was *Captain Blood*, but like the film itself his *Robin Hood* score was more of everything, the model for the hyperactive romance, its multiple themes crashing into each other like a mix of Steiner and Waxman turned up to eleven. This is sensory overload time—compare with Alfred Newman's more effective but easier to take *Gunga Din*—with wild action music that holds up and syrupy love music that is echoed in every overworking, whining string-heavy score that tried to add romantic spice that wasn't on the screen. This score is greatly praised by people who don't seem to realize that the unheralded composers for the Universal horror farm were doing much the same thing, but Korngold's style is perfect for this kind of adventure. *Captain Blood* (written in three weeks—and it wasn't even a replacement score!) has a better theme and *The Sea Hawk* has better action cues (the fight music is similar to "Rescue of the Princess" from *Star Wars*), but this was written to a better movie, so its greatest influence may be on composers' choices of projects.

While these two scores are not particularly deep, they have that most significant quality for other composers—people are aware of them. Not only was *Bride* weird, but in *Robin Hood*'s case the music was not just in the foreground, it was *loud*! How many composers heard this and thought, "That's what I wanna do!" The Korngold-Williams connection has been made so many times that I'll make it again, but if you imagine a darker, more psychotic swordfight in which *Robin Hood* gets skewered through the abdomen, the perfect accompaniment for it would be "Antonio's Death" from *Papillon*. The Korngold-Goldsmith Connection, revealed at last.

If *Kong* is the bottle, *Robin Hood* and *Bride* made the wine drunk by every composers who wrote a wild adventure or thematic fantasy score, right up to John Williams, James Horner and David Arnold.

### 3) *Citizen Kane* by Bernard Herrmann (1941)

Steiner began composing while under the influence of the silents and Korngold wrote for the concert hall. Bernard Herrmann came from the world of radio, where words were the stars. If the previous decade of films and scores said "Look!" then *Citizen Kane* said "Look, and listen, too." Herrmann wrote a score that was not glued onto its source but was a part of that source to the point where scenes were cut to the music. More than anyone else at the time Herrmann gave us insight into a film character's inner self, introducing us to Kane's gloomy, sad soul even before we've seen more than his lips, an exquisite sense of restraint tugging us along, scoring this fictional





biography as one might a mystery. Herrmann's use of transitional music binds the story together and keeps it from being merely a collection of important memories. *Kane's* richness is amazing when compared to the plain stylings of most other scores; not having bad guy themes for villains or love themes for women, the tedium of some of Herrmann's scoring for disturbed states of mind is absent here, and he proves Welles's comment about movies being the best set of trains by scoring suspense, sadness, love, frivolity and an intentionally awful aria.

*Kane* showed that composers did not need action and spectacle, that personality could be accompanied, too, "showing" the audience what it could not see. Sure, this was common in non-filmic forms and even Rózsa and others were trying the same thing, but Herrmann's trusting that he could get ideas across without bopping the audience off the head with loud, obvious music set a new standard of sophistication. It would take years to sink in (*Kane* was withdrawn soon after release), but here Herrmann started telling Hollywood to grow up. That composers if not producers listened is evident in the thoughtful, incisive scoring by those who wanted to avoid the obvious. Unlike its comic book predecessors, *Kane* is, arguably, the first successful film-musical attempt at literature.

### 3A) *Spellbound* by Miklós Rózsa (1945)

Jerry Goldsmith walks out humming the music. CBS radio loses a typist.

### 4) *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Alex North (1951)

North noted that he wrote this score to the emotional situations and the characters' feelings rather than dragging out a character theme each time someone came on screen. The sequence where Stanley Kowalski hits his wife Stella and breaks up the card game is unscored where someone else might have played loud, brassy music, but the minutes after this brutal moment are even more startling. In the aftermath of hitting his wife, Stanley is alone and remorseful. North does not put sad music here but an almost playful and definitely seductive, slow jazzy number that climaxes when Stanley and Stella embrace. North scored the aftermath of a wife-beating as a romantic interlude because that was how the characters saw it. At other times he plays a melancholic little tune when Blanche recalls her dead husband, but North slips it in so gently that sometimes we're not really aware it's playing until it stops, knocking us and Blanche out of her daydream. This is all strong stuff, and North offers no compromise in this film that's all about the intrusion of reality into fantasy... a perfect metaphor for what North did to film music of the time.



*Streetcar* would not have been influential if it were just a well-scored film. North and Leonard Rosenman were the first to move far from the studio-blessed orchestral sound into dissonant 20th century music, and this was the first major crack in what would be the splitting of film scoring into the traditional and, if not modern, non-traditional camps. That Bernstein's *Man with the Golden Arm* is considered the first "real" jazz score (though jazz is by its very nature improvisational... but you get the idea) does not take away from North's jazz-flavored achievement in orchestra scoring which, in its way, is comparable to Steiner's even as it rebukes Steiner's approach.

### 5) *The Man with the Golden Arm* by Elmer Bernstein (1955)

So help me, I've figured it out. This is the bridge between the orchestral score and all those crappy song compilations masquerading as film music. Its relationship to *Streetcar* is like that of *Bride* to *Kong*, a step away from its harsh, revolutionary predecessor, adjusted and moved closer to the mainstream. How far was this sleazy nightclub music from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* cocktail-hour sound? As Bernstein maintains (out of guilt?), this is not a jazz score but it is the grandpappy of everything from *Anatomy of a Murder* to the sax improvs in Trevor Jones's *Angel Heart*. A contingent of jazz greats and that swanky where-have-I-heard-this-before? riff make this the closest to true jazz we'd get in film until the embalming job done on Charlie Parker's sax performances in *Bird*. Not that anyone was begging for it or anything, but at least this pseudo-jazz sounded cool. This and *Touch of Evil* were the first "atmosphere" scores. Bernstein's semi-jazz does not cut through a scene with thematic lines so much as it sets us down in a sleazy world where Frank Sinatra shoots dope—talk about kooky! Not surprisingly, considering that this and *A Walk on the Wild Side* were written to Nelson Algren stories, this score's influence has been enormous yet limited: I can't think of a jazzy score not used to show lowlifes and crime (whether that includes *Last Tango in Paris* depends on your social life, or lack thereof). *Streetcar* showed how jazz could redirect the orchestra but *Golden Arm* said to hell with the orchestra, not just a spin on the form but a

whole new method of scoring. From Barry's *The Knack* to Howard's *Glen-garry Glen Ross*, jazz scores started here. And it wasn't a very big leap to the pop "score."

### 6) *Psycho* by Bernard Herrmann (1960)

Never mind the "driving" title music (superior to *North by Northwest's* monotonous fandango), the use of an all-string orchestra for a "black and white" sound, the perfect setting of a tense atmosphere that makes much of this music dull listening on its own. The subject of Fred Steiner's doctoral dissertation, Bernard Herrmann's *Psycho* has the unique distinction of leaving its mark on every single successor in its genre, even more so than *Kong* did on giant monster movies. Even ignoring all of this, there's still the fact that this film contains the single most famous piece of dramatic scoring.



The shower scene in *Psycho* is without a doubt the sickest moment in film history because Hitchcock and Herrmann played pretty much by the rules of crime melodrama, giving the audience a nice, suspenseful little mystery, not once foreshadowing what was to come, and then let them have it full-blast in the face. No sequence of film music has so violated filmgoers as the shower murder music, and yes, I am only talking about the music, not the whole scene. People hum the *Jaws* theme in a pool for a laugh or whistle the *Twilight Zone* title in weird situations, but Herrmann's endlessly copied slashing strings are the musical equivalent of what it feels like to die. Even so strong a piece of menace as the climax of Mancini's *Wait Until Dark* eases when it changes direction at the halfway point, going somewhere else. Herrmann's piece, though, doesn't really develop, there's just more of it, and it gets louder, and then it starts up again (and we imagine it starting up again, and again), then dies out. It isn't just relentless, it's hopeless. This is not just figuratively but literally an assault on the viewer, who can only watch what a character goes through (we can't see ourselves from a camera's point of view, nor switch position as editing lets us) but can actually experience—not just witness—the sound in the scene. The knife is going into Marion, not us, but we hear everything she sees and more; she can't hear that horrifying music, so on an aural level we are being hurt more than she is!

Never mind that the score, like all of Herrmann's, is more thoughtful than most other composers' work, that it is different and perfectly suited for its film. The shower scene is the one piece in film music that is critic-proof, the sequence everyone thereafter pointed to as indicative of what music could do (and Hitchcock wanted silence, originally). From *Corn* to cheesy horror "zingers" to every incident where strings were used for fright (instead of warmth) or interior suffering we hear echoes of this, the standard for psychological scoring.

### 7) *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Henry Mancini (1961)

It isn't Henry Mancini's fault he wrote a song and score that did just what they were supposed to, but *Breakfast at Tiffany's* marks the beginning of the end for the automatic use of the big orchestral score. I would be the first to say "Good riddance!" if this meant positive change and an era of wide experimentation, but it resulted in a wave of bland music that is still soaking us. The ultimate sweetening of scoring, this is music that fit comfortably on the radio. *Tiffany's* is the producer's dream, music that works perfectly in the film and on (millions of) records. That its song "Moon River" was well (though briefly) integrated into the score and played an important role in delineating the character of Holly Golightly is fine, but the subsequent impact of its bestseller status was Hiroshima-like. Every movie became fair game for hit-single treatment, whether historical epic (*Doctor Zhivago*), comedy (the bulk of Mancini's career), whatever the heck *Mondo Cane* was (documentary, supposedly) and even horror (*Hush*, *Hush Sweet Charlotte*). That this light, fluffy stuff beat out *El Cid* and *The Guns of Navarone* for the Oscar was an omen. Although the hit-song phenomenon can be traced back to Dimitri Tiomkin in various '50s westerns





(*High Noon*, *The Alamo*, etc.), everything you hate about producers meddling with movie music was probably inspired by this.

#### 7A) *Moriturus* by Jerry Goldsmith (1965)

In the cue "Esther and the P.O.W.s" is that goddamn four-note bad guy theme James Horner uses all the time! So, *that's* who we blame!

#### 8) *Bullitt* by Lalo Schiffrin (1968)



With everything Jerry Goldsmith wrote in the '60s, with all the diversity going on in rock, this score, the final (de-) evolution of jazz as an influence, is that decade's lasting legacy. To this day anything involving cops and robbers is routinely scored with a "street" sound, and even though this wasn't music of the street back in '68 it was perceived as such. Schiffrin, a dance band arranger with proclivities for jazz and dissonance, leaned heavily on the drum-kit and showed that movie music did not have to be either orchestral or that

puffy stuff. What should have happened was a deconstruction of what the public perceived as "movie music," not pushing aside the orchestral score but adding to the choices producers and audiences would accept. While Goldsmith was moving so fast that no one could pin him down (or, apparently, follow him), using the orchestra in every conceivable way, only Ennio Morricone did anything one could call startlingly progressive with his *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* and other spaghetti westerns. While Morricone chased the orchestra around, tossed in an electric guitar and a choir used not reverentially for a change, he ended up being so weird that no one else was willing to risk making an idiot of himself attempting to outdo him in outrageousness. So while *Ugly* reinvented orchestral soundtrack form, *Bullitt* and *The Graduate* tossed it out the window. Thematic scoring was corny, but harsh percussion was perfect as we headed toward the scary '70s. How could Schiffrin score this for an orchestra? This was bitter, gritty stuff, an action film saying we're all liars (even McQueen, to himself), so we're back in sleazy jazz territory. Schiffrin's take was foreboding, snappy stuff that would snicker at Bernstein's or Mancini's take. *Bullitt's* score was a slap in the face of anything that tried to sneak a little sweetness in, and its spirit is with us in *Lethal Weapon* and the urban sounds of everything else, though now we've got synths. If you think I'm wrong with this one, ask yourself if you hear more Schiffrin or Korngold in most of today's films.

#### 9) *Jaws* by John Williams (1975)



What can you say about a period in which the most acclaimed scores are vapid crap like *Summer of '42*, *Love Story* and *The Way We Were* or non-scores like *The Sting*, *Deliverance* and *American Graffiti*? North and Fielding worked, Goldsmith was in the middle of the longest winning streak in film scoring history, and there were experiments like Gil Mellé's freaky electronics for *The Andromeda Strain*, but outside of these men there was nothing much going on. Oh, and *Shaft*. It isn't that there weren't tons of scores with

themes—that's all some had—but film scoring was either Mancini-like, Schiffrin-like, or *Godfatherish*-Big-Theme-then-air-conditioner-hum a la *The Towering Inferno*. Steven Spielberg's *The Sugarland Express* had what could have been a traditional Americana-like score, but Williams's main theme was warm and full of feeling. Spielberg's next project would become the most popular film of all time in an era where that title was not reassigned every other month. *Jaws* did not become so popular because it broke new ground but because it went back to the adventures and scary monsters of the past and resurrected them with all the energy a major studio's bank account could buy. Instead of forging ahead, soundtrack fan Spielberg did an old monster movie the way no one else ever did, with more style than those hack directors had, nothing experimental on the screen but plenty of it behind the camera. John Williams joined this trip to juice up the past with modern technique, and instead of coming up with something new form-wise he broke Golden-Age-style scoring out of its pop-soundtrack-built prison.

I have no doubt that *Jaws* is a more important score than *Star Wars*. While the latter made soundtrack fans, *Jaws* made believers of those in the industry, the people who were hot to find the next big theme for their movies.

The big theme in *Jaws* is based on two notes, and it's this very simplicity that makes it so clever and funny. "We're being creeped out by *this*?" people thought, scared and tickled at the same time. Even Spielberg said his initial reaction to the theme was something like "You've gotta be kidding," but Williams's dead-on nailing of the film's mix of fun and shock made everyone think maybe a big orchestral score is what we need.

*Jaws* is a Universal-scaled *Moby Dick* that Spielberg wanted scored as an adventure, not a horror movie, and Williams's action music prods the audience as much as any Hans Salter monster movie score. What Williams accomplished is clear in the scene where Robert Shaw's character is about to fire on the shark and is waiting for Richard Dreyfuss's ichthyologist (that's monster scientist) to attach the barrels to the line. Williams once showed this scene unscored in a Boston Pops TV special, and what we got was Shaw and Dreyfuss getting irritated with each other while Roy Scheider yells at them to shoot the shark, which is swimming toward the boat, giving Shaw a chance to "tag" it. Without music, the scene holds the interest, but it is only setting up a plot point. What Williams does is bring in his quasi-fugue as a bridge between the routinely adventurous music and a march-like rhythm that builds up the tension somewhat. The key to Williams's attack is Scheider, because he, like the audience, thinks this is a big moment, and Williams scores this as the musical climax of the picture. When it appears that Dreyfuss is not going to set the line in time, Williams brings in the shark theme, increasing the tension, though the shark isn't really a threat at this point.

And then Williams does something that, no matter how many times I've seen it, makes this the most thrilling part of the movie: he has the strings take on the agitated emotional state of Scheider, an observer (like us) who is scared shitless of that shark while these two idiots are just interested in playing games with it. Scheider's shouting at them to shoot it and we agree, but they aren't even trying to kill it right now, and we join him in his hysteria against all logic *only* because Williams has the shark theme, its notes inverted now, pounding away at its loudest.

What Williams did here was get the audience incredibly worked up over very little; he got them involved by directing the emotional thrust of the scene, adding a dimension to the film that was not there before. Music's power could not be demonstrated in this way in movies like *Nashville*, *Barry Lyndon* or *Dog Day Afternoon*. What Williams did was take an opportunity and run with it. Suddenly, the thematic, dramatic score was a major player again.

Williams's achievement did not result in Williams-like scores but the willingness to use music traditionally. Directors like DePalma, Meyer, Lucas and Scorsese—the new breed—were ready to do this, the veterans more reluctant. If the music was not so new, its craft and usefulness was.

#### 10) *Halloween* by John Carpenter (1978)

I wish it wasn't so but it is. John Carpenter's simple and repetitive bad-mood music is everything *Kong* and *Kane* are not, a daring break with scoring traditions. I can't think of anything that preceded it in synth scoring that worked so well (though the main theme is just like the three-note *Logan's Run* title music). This forerunner of Christopher Young's complex sound atmospheres is terribly dated, and Carpenter's whole musical career is a spin on this one work spiced with the old horror-film "stingers," and has brought



us hundreds of keyboard-leaners and boring drones. All art aspires to be as simple as possible and no simpler, but the children of *Halloween* took this approach to a stupidly plain level. That synths are good for harshness, loneliness and alienation made them perfect tools for all the depressing horror junk to come, and this and Moroder's *Midnight Express* cleared the way for the electronics of Horner, Jarre and Vangelis. But they also made it safe for Harold Faltermeyer and dozens of others who were there simply to hold one sound over a scene, perfect for directors who wanted no intrusion but useless in the guiding of a film's unique emotional and dramatic stream through the twists and jumps of editing and plot. This linear method can be heard as much in the intent as the style of *The Terminator* and *Aliens* (the score that launched a thousand bad temp tracks). The idea of one guy with his Casio being able to fill that soundtrack without having to pay an orchestra must have made producers swoon, but was this really music to get enthusiastic over as Siskel and Ebert did?

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Are you properly incensed by any omission of one of your favorite composers or scores? Think John missed something important? Think any of his choices are redundant? We live for this stuff—write in and tell us! -LK





# SCORE



**RATINGS:**  
 5 best  
 4 really good  
 3 average  
 2 two  
 1 Goldeneye

**Raiders of the Lost Ark** • JOHN WILLIAMS. DCC Compact Classics 025-090. 19 tracks - 73:32 • Record producers: Stop! Stop fulfilling my dreams! *I can't stand any more happiness!* Here's the latest collector's wet dream, a sterling expanded version of John Williams's classic adventure score, 74 minutes of the kind of thrills only Johnny W. can provide. I always like Williams's first crack at a series the best; there's a melodic purity and instinctive response to *Raiders* and the original *Star Wars* that got subdued when Williams started feeling the need to top himself in sequel after sequel. *Raiders* is the culmination of his late '70s/early '80s adventure/spectacle style, brimming with unforgettable melodies, from the cocky heroic brass march that only Williams could get away with to the spooky, mystical Ark theme, the Max Steineresque Marion's theme, and enough bracing action material for half a dozen similar movies. Available here for the first time is Williams's atmospheric, suspenseful opening and the pumping, manly low brass rhythms that accompany Indy's swing across the booby-trapped cave pit; the pulsing, minor-key version of the Indy theme heard as Jones flies to Mongolia, the slicing, brassy fight beneath the propellers of the flying wing, a complete version of the desert truck chase that includes the build-up to the final march section that was hacked out of the original Columbia album, the haunting woodwind version of the Ark theme heard in Marion's bar as she pulls the headpiece of the Staff of Ra out of her shirt, and, oh, about a million other things. As in the Nick Redman-produced *Star Wars* boxed set, the music is taken from the original master tapes, so even cues that are not identified as having extra music (like Marion's theme) often feature new little intros and fade-outs. DCC's "audiophile" mastering lives up to its name with sensationally crisp brass and clear stereo separation. Rockin'. Lukas himself provides copious liner notes, complete with new comments by Williams, and this CD is so good even Ford Thaxton congratulated Kendall on its quality on the Internet! You see, music really can bring us together! **5** -Jeff Bond

**Chinatown** • JERRY GOLDSMITH. Varèse, Sarabande VSD-5677. 12 tracks - 31:22 • This is yet another classic score from Goldsmith, for Roman Polanski's fascinating Jack Nicholson gumshoe pic, a hasty re-score written in an astonishing nine days. From the dreamy, lushly atmospheric, bittersweet (can I load any more adjectives in here?) trumpet solo title theme to the percussive avant garde rhythms and hard-edged textures of the incidental music, Goldsmith's score never ceases to amaze; he must use every single structural component of the grand piano in here, probably even the bench. The rumbling, brushed piano strings and harps, scratcher combs, and even tougher-than-usual low-end piano create a tangible aura of suspense and mystery, and Goldsmith scores the introduction of a key character late in the film with the same bizarre, almost anthropomorphic string playing he used in *The Mephisto Waltz* and *Poltergeist*, wrenching tortured, ghostly voices out of the instruments. Remarkably, his modernistic techniques only reinforce the antique aura of the film, so that even the few source cues of '30s songs fit into this streamlined package seamlessly. I always used to excise the source cues when I taped the ABC LP, paring the music down to the 23 minutes of score, but they actually set Goldsmith's music off nicely, particularly a

piano rendition of Jerome Kern's lovely "The Way You Look Tonight." Sound is terrific in most of the incidental cues, although the old ABC recording had some distortion that creeps up on the trumpet solos a bit. Still, Varèse deserves high praise for finally getting this brilliant score out on CD; any month that can see this and an expanded *Raiders of the Lost Ark* committed has to be enshrined in collector lore. **5** -Jeff Bond

**Powder** • JERRY GOLDSMITH. Hollywood HR 62038-2. 8 tracks - 34:31 • If you see one film directed by a convicted child molester this year, make it: *Powder!* Goldsmith has been on something of a roll in '95, with yeoman work on *Congo* and *First Knight* and another Emmy win for his *Star Trek: Voyager* theme. That leaves *Powder* in the unenviable position of being the composer's big disappointment of the year. Given the uplifting subject matter things could have been a lot worse: *Powder* is a bittersweet mix of *Field of Dreams* feel-goodism and lightweight science fiction that wants to make us all just get along, but comes off as more a collection of emotional set pieces. Goldsmith maintains his current, more acoustic sound, scoring the film's numerous "uneasily powerful" sequences with a blend of water-drop bars, brass and high-tension, impressionistic strings that's quite effective, particularly in a genuinely powerful scene involving a shot deer. The fantasy elements of the movie allow Goldsmith to recapture some of the off-kilter sensibility and striking orchestral effects for which he's justly famous, while the rural setting conjures up a hint of the delicate, bucolic string writing he brought to works like *The Other* and *The Illustrated Man*, albeit in a much more subdued form. But the "Theme from *Powder*" comes off more like a poor cousin of the *Rudy* theme, almost too restrained in its melodic pull to successfully manipulate the audience during the numerous tear-jerker scenes. Since the *Powder* character's problem is his disassociation from other people, the remoteness of the theme may be intentional, but in the big moments, particularly the climax ("Everywhere"), the effect is of loud music that isn't particularly moving. The fault seems to lie more with the film than Goldsmith, however; he seems to tread water only when the film itself fails to connect or performs a complete cop-out, as it does in its glitzy special effects finale. The score works just fine in the movie's one truly moving sequence between human beings, involving sheriff Lance Henriksen and his sick wife ("Steven and the Snow"). At any rate, this music is far more affecting isolated on CD than it is within Victor Salva's wildly uneven movie. **3** -Jeff Bond

**The Scarlet Letter** • JOHN BARRY. Epic Soundtrax EK 67431. 23 tracks - 70:21 • After going through Ennio Morricone (who didn't write a score) and Elmer Bernstein (who did), the makers of *The Scarlet Letter* finally got the composer they should have hired in the first place—John Barry. Barry's score is filled with all the passion and suspense the ridiculous melodrama lacks. As Demi Moore and Gary Oldman spew out pseudo-period banalities and throw themselves into hubba-hubba sex scenes, Barry's effortless love theme provides a rich overtone that keeps the whole enterprise from derailing. This entrancing melody has a mature, questioning aura that perfectly matches the film.

The most enjoyable aspect of the score, though, is the way Barry mixes romance with his special blend of

"dark lyricism." The chronological recording begins with the rousing "community" theme, develops into the love music, and then gradually becomes frightening as Roger Pryne starts his campaign of revenge. The musical climax, where Roger's minor-key theme transforms into the rafeal music for the Indian raid, is as violently stirring as the love theme is beautiful.

The album is harmed only by the inclusion of the work of two other composers. Early on, Peter Buffett provides a few minutes of Native American music, which sounds like rotten James Horner and is alarmingly out of place with Barry's score. A little later, a choral "Agnus Dei" (based on Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber) pops up and drags on somnambulant for ten minutes. This would be less annoying if the piece wasn't so peripheral to the film. But these are mere asides to this excellent album. **4** -Ryan Harvey

**To Die For** • DANNY ELFMAN, VARIOUS. Varèse Sarabande VSD-5646. 14 tracks - 43:04 • As you might expect from a Gus Van Sant film, this album is *weird* (remember Goldenthal's *Drugstore Cowboy*?). Danny Elfman's unique score, which unfortunately doesn't even stretch as far as 20 minutes, takes ideas from the less subdued moments of his recent *Dolores Claiborne* (almost violent pizzicato strings and similarly tricky violin solos) and extends them to an almost bizarre extent, incorporating along the way some very hard rock, a few bongos, and a kitschy, daytime TV-inspired "theme" for Suzie (Nicole Kidman) featuring none other than Little Gus and the Suzettes! This is definitely music for a black comedy, and it has Elfman's style stamped all over it—"Main Titles" are four minutes of wacky variations of a tiny pizzicato motif weaved through different ensembles, including rock band and church organ! "Weepy Donuts" starts off as a melancholy piano solo, then builds into something a little more ominous; "Murder!" and "Creepy Creepy" speak for themselves. Surprisingly, the "Various Artists" section of the disc is impressively eclectic and works well, save one completely unlistenable piece of heavy metal by Nailbomb. What's left is an emotional ballad co-written by Rachmaninov (!), a dance track that's a cut above (Strawpeople's "Wings of Desire"), and some good old quality American rock 'n' roll ("Season of the Witch"). Accompanying a score that Elfman probably hasn't had as much fun writing since *Beetlejuice*, the result is an experience which very cunningly grows on you. Weird, yes, but good-weird. **3 1/2** -J. Tornaiainen

**Unstrung Heroes** • THOMAS NEWMAN. Hollywood HR-62035-2. 19 tracks - 29:51 • In an interview earlier this year, Thomas Newman described several of the characters in Diane Keaton's *Unstrung Heroes* as "whacked out," therefore his music would naturally have to reflect this situation. I guess he wasn't joking! With key instrumental credits including zither, processed hurdy gurdy, psaltery (come again?) and, of course, "door," Newman has delivered perhaps his most experimental film score to date. Literally each track creates its own sound-world so unique, and so alien to the stereotypical preconceptions of what movie music "sounds" like, that the finished score makes 1993's *Flesh and Bone* now sound like "vintage Williams." That is not to put down John Williams (an entirely different composer) or either of the Newman scores, because this short but substantial work is one of inspiration and near-genius, so that the only faults suffered by the album are a tendency to repeat ideas during its brief running time and a lack of a memorable tune. However, Thomas has never let this stand in his way before, and here also these points are easy to get past. And so we arrive "Outside 2B," "Inside 2B" and "Nowhere Near 2B," to the CD's opening tracks. These employ various untuned plucked strings and pedal steel over brief rhythmically and thematically minimal motifs, setting the scene for the way in which much of



the material is eventually developed. Newman has an uncanny ability to hold your attention either through the use of heart-rendering melodies with subtle orchestral palettes, or edgy and propulsive musical fragments—here he does just that with a fascinating score created almost entirely from the latter. In a change of pace, it is later on that Newman takes us to the real heart of the film, as “Home Movies,” with its relatively simple piano and strings, proves to be a deeply poignant climax to what is, by surprise, quite an urban score. But then, the best thing about Thomas Newman is that you never can know what to expect. 4 —James Törnainen

**Sudden Death** • JOHN D EBNEY. Varèse Sarabande VSD-5663. 9 tracks • 30:30 • John Debney gives us either an ode to, or a rip-off of, James Newton Howard's *The Fugitive* here—a very rhythmic score with a dark, but heroic, main theme. Much of it is fast-paced action music featuring lots of electronic percussion, copying *The Fugitive*'s rhythms and chord progressions at times: compare Debney's “Locker Room Chase” with Howard's “Helicopter Chase.” At other times it resembles Mark Isham's action cues from *TimeCop*, with short, staccato flashes in the brass and simple ostinatos in the percussion. (It makes sense that this would sound like *TimeCop*, since *TimeCop* was the lousy Peter Hyams action film starring Jean-Claude Van Damme which came out at this time last year; Hyams is known for insisting on nothing but sustain-and-hit padding from his composers.) The music does a good job of letting you know what's happening in the movie—fast music for someone being chased, driving rhythms building up to a sudden cut-off, telling you that something is about to explode (like “Bishop's Countdown” from *Aliens* or the end of “The Last Battle” from *Star Wars*). Overall, fans of *The Fugitive* might want to check it out. As for everybody else, you won't be missing much. I like a lot of Debney's stuff, but I found this score disappointing. I'm very anxious to hear his work on *Cutthroat Island*, though. 2½ —Jason Foster

**The Valley of Gwangi**: The Classic Film Music of Jerome Moross. Silva Screen SSD-1049. 14 tracks • 77:50 • The late Jerome Moross is one of the most overlooked film composers around; he has been known primarily for *The Big Country*, regarded by many as the quintessential western film score. His career was balanced between film scores and concert music, making his film work less prodigious than some better known composers. But he did score over a dozen films from 1948-1969, and it's high time he became known as something other than the guy who wrote *The Big Country*. This disc is titled for what is surely Moross's most overlooked gem of a score, for Ray Harryhausen's “dinosaur western,” *The Valley of Gwangi*, reproduced almost in its entirety in an 18-minute suite. *Gwangi* is clearly an offshoot of *The Big Country* with its muscular western rhythms, but Moross ingeniously incorporates the film's monster movie aspects. The ten-note “Gwangi” theme works equally well as a characterization of the untamed power of the title dinosaur itself and for the manly cowpokes who eventually lasso and capture it, and it evokes real pathos in a sweeping minor-key setting at the climax of the film. Elsewhere Moross provides two stupendous rhythmic themes for low brass, particularly trombones, and strings, which underscore the primitive might of the dinosaurs, and a thrilling mix of western riding music and percussive Herminian fantasy techniques to accompany the exploration of the movie's Forbidden Valley. *Gwangi* has long been overlooked in favor of Herrmann's and Rózsa's scores for more popular Harryhausen films, but Moross's work is every bit as exciting and memorable, and the bizarre contrast of western and fantasy scoring techniques provides for fascinating listening. Moross's style is uniquely American, related to Copland and Ives but with its own unmistakable voice, and this terrific CD showcases a broad range of film work, including the ragtime turn-of-the-century sounds and rich characterization of the Mississippi in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, exciting ethnic rhythms for *The Sharkfighters*, beautiful evocations of Medieval Europe for *The War Lord*, subtle jazz-influenced sounds for the dramas *Rachel, Rachel* and *Five Finger Exercise* and the broader, outdoorsy action of *Gwangi* and *The Mountain Road*; even Moross's indelible theme for the TV series *Wagon Train* is included. Paul Bateman's conducting is right on target and he's aided by orchestral reconstructions from the late, lamented Christopher Palmer (to whom the album is dedicated) and John Barry associate Nic Raine, who resurrected *The Valley of Gwangi*. My only quibble is that they've

left out Moross's terrific main title music to *Gwangi* in an otherwise comprehensive suite; as the album is 78 minutes in length, there evidently just wasn't room left.

This CD consists almost entirely of previously unreleased material, worth purchasing for the dynamic *Gwangi* suite alone. Silva has taken plenty of flak for their “crappy compilations,” but if it takes a hundred of those releases to finance collections like this it would be worth it; with their excellent re-recording of *The Big Country* and now this, Silva has truly done the memory of Jerome Moross a great service. 4 —Jeff Bond

**Hollywood '95**. Varèse Sarabande VSD-5671. 14 tracks • 52:19 • Like most compilation albums, Joel McNeely's annual salute to big-budget movie scores consists almost entirely of music that any self-respecting soundtrack collector already has: Goldenthal's *Batman Forever* (the main title, “Nygma Variations,” “Chase Noir,” “Mouth to Mouth Nocturne” and “Victory”), Horner's *Apollo 13* (“The Launch”), Silvestri's *Judge Dredd* (a suite incorporating the title sequence [not on the Epic CD], the opening flight through Mega City One, Max Von Sydow's exile and the finale), Horner's *Casper* (“Casper's Lullaby”), James Newton Howard's theme to *Waterworld*, Horner's ungraspable end title to *Braveheart*, Goldsmith's *First Knight* (“Arthur's Fanfare” and an end title cribbed from other music in the film), and the love theme from *That Hamilton Woman* as a salute to the late Miklós Rózsa. But *Hollywood '95* also has a little added bonus: Jerry Goldsmith's terrific *Judge Dredd* trailer music, 49 seconds of spine-tingling rhythms and a bombastic fanfare that made the dynamically edited *Dredd* trailer one of the most exciting things in theaters all year. McNeely has a thing for taking compositions quickly, which normally pays off because most conductors go to sleep when performing film music. In the case of the *Judge Dredd* trailer, however, we're talking about a minute of music: is it too much to ask that we stop and smell the roses? McNeely burns through this thing so fast there's barely time to hear it, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra gets such an epic rumble going that Goldsmith's rhythms and clanging metallic percussion almost get buried beneath the thunder. It's still pretty damn neat, though, and it's a miracle anyone bothered to preserve this on disc. Of the music I didn't previously own, Horner's *Apollo 13* offered a bit more excitement (with some potent brass rhythms about seven minutes into the nine-minute launch cue) than I'd recalled from the film, although he still squanders any thrills he can muster by constantly slipping back into insufferably precious choral work and reshaped material from *Brainstorm*. Worse is his amorphous *Braveheart* end title; I've played this about half a dozen times and I still can't remember one fragment of music. Of the non-*Batman* material, Silvestri's DeMille-sized *Judge Dredd* and James Newton Howard's nice *Waterworld* theme come off best, along with Goldsmith's noble *First Knight*. Quite a nice package for those who don't have a multiple-disc CD player. 3 —Jeff Bond

**Lord of Illusions** • SIMON BOSWELL. Mute 9009-2. 15 tracks • 45:54 • Simon Boswell, like Christopher Young before him, has given director Clive Barker an active, purposeful score for synths and orchestra. With a sound palette beamed up by chorus, *Lord of Illusions* is less melodic and more “horrific” than *Hellraiser*, but still cohesive and satisfying. The main title is stunning—gentle, majestic and sinister—and left me anticipating a great score. I was somewhat disappointed.

The other main theme of the score, an intriguing melody set to an even more so harmonic base, is introduced in the second track, voiced by saxophone, and subsequently developed into a love cue and the denouement cue. It seems to be a kind of catch-all motif, serving as a theme for both our ridiculously-named protagonist, Harry D'Amour, and his love for the equally unfortunate Dorothea Swann. The closest thing to action music is “Swann's Last Act,” which opens with the driving bass rhythms of “Louis's Revenge” from *Interview with the Vampire* and peaks with endlessly cycling chromatic-scale activity that wears out its welcome 45 seconds before the track ends. “Born to Murder the World” is also fairly actiony, quoting the *Lord of Illusions* theme over urgent brass ostinatos that start to sound like *Darkman* after a while. There is also the requisite horror music: “God's Eyes,” with its Goldenthalic low-brass convulsions and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-like snake material, and “Origami Man,” a more subdued piece featuring “vocal improvisations by Diamanda Galás” (who?) that are so warped and twisted as to be truly chilling.

The score is well-performed by the North West Sinfonia Orchestra; the chorus gets no separate credit, as usual. Mute's CD is nice but strange, featuring Barker liner notes and photograph, plus film stills. There are a few dialogue excerpts, but they're not too bad; they are well placed within the cues and don't interfere with the music. Alas, they are not indexed separately, so forget about programming them out. There are also four songs: one each by Erasure, Brave Combo, Joshua White, and the aforementioned Diamanda Galás. The packaging places the artist's name before each track, meaning that 11 of the 15 tracks are prefaced “Simon Boswell.” At the same time, useful information, like track times, is omitted. 3 —Owen T. Cunningham

#### Lukas's Selected and Brief Comments:

**GoldenEye**: Argh! No more cautious optimism! Eric Serra's score is an abomination and actually wrecks the movie. Half nonsensical synth-and-percussion (the French disco-pop drivel the composer specializes in), half faux-Barry love theme (with none of the harmonic power Barry would use to back it up), the score is so poor that scene after scene is just left to die. The bad guy reveals his sordid history to Bond, and Serra plays—bad piano cocktail lounge music? Bond fights for his life and Serra uses—a slow, boring, dumb percussion loop? The film itself is a curious rehash of tried-and-true Bond elements dumped into an action film format; not only is Serra's score not in the Barry tradition, and not in any kind of American action film tradition (the problem with Kamen's *Licence to Kill*), but it doesn't even have the convictions of his French underworld music for *The Professional* and *La Femme Nikita*. It's amazing the score was not thrown out; as it was, the producers only had time to have British composer John Altmann, who conducted Serra's score, re-write the tank chase, which is better but out-of-place (and inaudible). Newspaper reviews everywhere have trashed Serra's score—a James Bond movie without the James Bond theme music? (Bono's “Goldeneye” song, performed by Tina Turner, is also terrible.) I'm furious. Avoid Virgin's album like the plague.

**The Scarlet Letter**: Double argh! A long-winded, boring re-write of *Dances with Wolves*—but without even a good melody! Barry's style is reduced to a non sequitur collection of tired thematic fragments we've heard a million times before. He only had two weeks, but in the past, he would endow even something as goofy as *Legend of the Lone Ranger* with a beautiful tune. Let Serra work for Joffe, get Barry back on Bond.

**To Die For**: I found this documentary-styled film overrated—it dragged on and was not nearly as outrageous or funny as it was made out to be, but it was far too ridiculous to be serious. Elfman's clever and eclectic score tried its best to find or create a voice for the movie. He avoided grandiose musical statements, probably a wise call, and instead wrote silly soap-like music for Nicole Kidman's interludes, wacky “la la la” stuff for the credits and major transitions, and heavy metal for the poor white kids, among other things. Ultimately, he did match the vision of the movie—fragmentary, very thoroughly “produced,” but not particularly profound, or funny. Nicole Kidman was hot.

**Powder**: A bad movie combining the Christ story (a la *E.T.* and *Starman*) with Marvel Comics' *X-Men* (confused adolescent with super powers—pretty homoerotic movie, too) with *Highway to Heaven*. Goldsmith autopiloted some nice moments for the magic-power and people-to-people scenes, but whereas in the past he might have scored the film overall with a powerful contrast of dark to light (see *Magic*), he here went for sunny *Rudy*-ness which merely glooped on more unconvincing “don't worry, it's happy” explicitness.

**Copycat**: I don't have Milan's album yet, but Christopher Young pulled out a nice “Jennifer 9” (or 10 or 11) suspense score in a painfully traditional hack-thriller framework. Music for these movies is usually terrible, but as in 1992's *Jennifer 8*, Young provided a lovely, melodic main theme which recurs a few times, plus well-crafted scare-stuff incorporating breathing effects. What a bad movie; it's everything *Seven* avoided.

**Hollywood '95**: It's remarkable how a lot of summer movie scores I found so underwhelming can be made to look good by just taking their best moments—even Horner's *Apollo 13* “The Launch” doesn't seem that bad on its own. Nevertheless, they sure do sound like they're all the same score. Nice *Batman*-styled cover painting by Matt Peak, er, “Matthew Joseph Peak.” •



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